17-6

LIBRARY
OF THE
Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.
Case
Shel
Boo
BT 1210 .D6 1765
Dodd, William, 1729-1777.
The truth of the Christian
religion vindicated from

Seminary

The TRUTH of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Vindicated from the OBJECTIONS of

UNBELIEVERS;

Particularly, of

Mr. JOHN JAMES ROUSSEAU.

In a SERIES of DISSERTATIONS.

By the EDITORS of the CHRISTIAN'S MAGAZINE.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools. Rom. i. 22.

LONDON,

Printed for J. NEWBERY, at the Bible and Sun, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

M DCC LXV.

PREFACE.

WHEN writers, held in great eſtimation, are endeavouring, by all means in their power, to diſcredit the Chriſtian Religion; *while they make their works of entertainment the vehicle of their poiſon, and inſert their objections againſt the truth of* CHRIST *even in their romances; every attempt to obviate their cavils, and vindicate our Holy Religion, may well be thought neceſſary.*

No writer, perhaps, hath attacked Chriſtianity with more ſubtilty than Rouſſeau, *in his* EMILIUS; *and it may ſeem ſtrange that, while his book hath been tranſlated, and generally read amongſt us, no antidote hath yet been offered to the public againſt the poiſon of the* Savoyard Vicar's Creed. *Our neighbours on the continent have acted differently: ſeveral able and ſpirited anſwers have been publiſhed there, ſufficient to confute and to convince* Rouſſeau, *and his admirers; and to ſhew that the Religion of* CHRIST

is ſuperior to all their varied and laboured attacks.

After a peruſal of ſome of theſe anſwers, and finding that no one had yet undertaken the refutation of Mr. Rouſſeau, *in our language; we determined to lay before the public a* Series of Diſſertations *on ſuch important topics of revealed Religion, as more immediately reſpect our adverſary's objections; freely uſing ſuch arguments as we found in the anſwers of the learned on the continent; and ſo arranging our matter, as that each diſſertation may be complete, and of uſe in itſelf, ſeparate from it's immediate reference to the preſent controverſy. And here we muſt in particular pay our reſpects to Mr.* Bitaube, *to whoſe very ingenious work, intitled,* Réfutation du nouvel ouvrage de Jean Jaques Rouſſeau, *we are in an eſpecial manner obliged.*

The cauſe in which we are engaged is, certainly, of the greateſt moment: the topics which we handle are of the firſt importance in that cauſe: the adverſary we attempt to refute, (and whoſe opinions, we truſt, will be found abundantly refuted) is of no mean character

racter: On all which accounts, we hope, that our labour will be acceptable, and meet with encouragement from the friends to Religion and their country: For, infidelity, without queſtion, is as pernicious to a ſtate, as it is to individuals; ſince no kingdom, more than any individual, can poſſibly be happy without Religion. Whatever tends, therefore, to ſtem the progreſs of infidelity, deſerves, and, we are confident, will find, the encouragement of every patriot, as well as of every ſincere Chriſtian: For, Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation; *but infidelity and* vice are a reproach to any people.

We have nothing further to add, but our beſt thanks to the liberal encouragers of this work in the former mode of it's publication, whom we have endeavoured to oblige, by ſubjoining a general index; and who, we hope, as deſirous to ſerve the cauſe of our common Chriſtianity, will endeavour to ſpread amongſt their neighbours, this, and works of the like nature, to ſtem, if poſſible, the increaſing tide of deiſm and infidelity.

TABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

DISSERTATION I.

On the natural ſtate and condition of man.

INTRODUCTION Page 1

SECT. I. *The ſtate of infancy conſidered* 4
II. *Truth* ibid.
III. *Happineſs* 6
IV. *The dominion of fleſh and ſenſe over reaſon* 9
V. *Man's unavoidable evils* 15
VI. *Proofs of original depravity* 17
VII. *Rouſſeau refuted* 21
VIII. *Notions of the antient philoſophers, reſpecting human depravity* 24
IX. *Difficulties in the doctrine of original ſin unavoidable* 27
X. *Original ſin fully remedied by redemption* 33

DISSERTATION

DISSERTATION II.

On the neceſſity of revelation.

SECT. I. *Strictures on Rouſſeau* Page 36
II. *Ignorance of* GOD, *proof of the want of revelation* 43
III. *The ignorance and inconſiſtency of philoſophers reſpecting* GOD 48
IV. —*Reſpecting the origin of the world* 49
V. —*Reſpecting the ſoul* 51
VI. —*Reſpecting the condition and deſignation of man* 52
VII. —*Reſpecting moral truths* 56
VIII. *Application to Rouſſeau* 60
IX. *Further proof of the neceſſity of revelation* 72
X. *Internal worſhip eſſential to external* 79
XI. *The diſcovery of remiſſion of ſins, a further proof of the neceſſity of revelation* 87
XII. *A detail of the revelation of the great promiſe of a Redeemer* 90
XIII. *Moſes* 94
XIV. *Difficulties in revelation, no objection to the belief of it* 100
XV. *Rouſſeau's diſtinction of the obligation to ſubmit to revelation examined* 109

XVI.

XVI. *His self contradiction, &c.* Page 114
XVII. *Of human faith* 117
XVIII. *Of the allowed notoriety of the facts* 125

DISSERTATION III.

On miracles.

SECT. I. *Introduction* 133
II. *The means used to propagate Christianity, proper* 134
III. *The propagation of Christianity, the greatest miracle* 135
IV. *The first preachers of Christianity a proof of it's divinity* 138
V. *Miracles, &c. as well attested as we could desire* 142
VI. *Miracles sufficiently attested* 149
VII. *The continuance of Christianity, a miracle* 152
VIII. *Witnesses to Christian miracles* 156
XI. *The reason of miracles* 159
X. *The Christian miracles, fit, proper, and benign* 164
XI. *Miracles prove the truth of a doctrine. A survey of scripture in that light* 171, 174
XII. *Heathens unjustifiable in punishing Christians* 192
XIII. *Human reason weak, and incapable alone of discovering religious truths* 196

XIV. *The simplicity of faith* Page 203
XV. *Reason leads to a belief in miracles* 205
XVI. *Miracles most proper* 217
XVII. *Of authority, and of that of the Church in particular* 223, 231
XVIII. *Why* CHRIST's *miracles were rejected* 234
XIX. *The natural and plain consequence of miracles* 237
XX. *Apollonius Tyaneus* 241
XXI. *Real miracles inconteſtable evidences of truth* 244

DISSERTATION IV.

On the ſcriptures.

SECT. I. 267
II. *Common men muſt reſt in the authority of the Chriſtian Church* 273
III. *Concerning the various copies and readings of the S. S.* 277
IV. *S. S. ſufficiently known and read* 283

DISSERTATION V.

The moral character of JESUS CHRIST *compared with that of Socrates.*

SECT. I. *Introduction* 286
II. *Rouſſeau's teſtimony to the excellency of the S. S.* 288

III.

III. *Moral character of* JESUS CHRIST Page 295
IV. *The doctrine of* CHRIST, *and the preparation for his coming* 300
V. *The life and death of* JESUS CHRIST 303
VI. *The disciples of* CHRIST *and Socrates* 305
VII. *Martyrs* 309
VIII. *Evidences to the truth of Christianity, from the character of* CHRIST 314

DISSERTATION VI.

The Christian, Mahometan, and Jewish Religions compared: with a view of the prophecies.

SECT. I. *The argument stated, and Rousseau's inconsistency shewn* 319
II. *The Mahometan Religion examined, and compared with the Christian* 322
III. *An enquiry into the manner in which the Mahometan and Christian Religion were propagated* 330
IV. *Of the success of the Mahometan Religion* 333
V. *Rousseau refuted, and the Christian vindicated* 334

VI. *Christians have sufficient proofs to convince the Jews: some of them advanced: Christian Religion most ancient* Page 338

VII. JESUS CHRIST *proved to be the Messiah, from a view of the prophecies* 341

VIII. JESUS CHRIST *proved to be the Messiah, from a review of what has happened since his coming* 355

IX. *Application to the Jews; and consideration of what Rousseau urges for them* 364

X. *Of modern Judaism* 378

XI. *A suffering Messiah necessary and proper for man* 382

XII. *The divine character of* JESUS CHRIST 387

XIII. *Jewish obstinacy, proof of the truth of Christianity* 398

XIV. *Proofs from the prophecies concerning the city and temple of Jerusalem* 400

XV. *Proof from the attempt of Julian to rebuild Jerusalem* 406

XVI. *Concluding proofs from the state of the Jews* 417

THE

DISSERTATION I.

ON THE

Natural STATE and CONDITION of MAN.

WE propoſe to ſpeak of the many invincible proofs, which demonſtrate the *beauty*, *grandeur* and *excellence*, of the *Chriſtian Religion*. Introduction.

And, that we may preſerve ſome certain method, we will begin with a particular ſubject, whereon it is conceived we ought to inſiſt, becauſe, all others depend upon it, as their baſis and foundation. And this ſubject conſiſts in tracing out the cauſe and origin of all thoſe evils, to which our ſouls and bodies are liable, even from the ſtate of infancy.

Let us obſerve how Rouſſeau, the author of a late treatiſe on Education, entitled, EMILIUS, ſpeaks of this ſtate: "For "what reaſon, ſays he *, my ſoul is thus

* Vol. III. p. 121.

" ſubjected to the organs of ſenſe, and " chained to a body, which lays it under " ſo much reſtraint ; I know not, nor do I " preſume to enter into the decrees of the " Almighty : but I may, without temerity, " form a *modeſt conjecture*, or two, on this " head. I ſay then, if the mind of man " had remained perfectly free and pure, " what merit could he have pretended to, " in admiring and purſuing that order which " he ſaw already eſtabliſhed ; and which he " lay under no temptation to diſturb ? It is " true, he would have been happy, but he " could not have attained that moſt ſub- " lime degree of felicity, the glory of virtue, " and the teſtimony of a good conſcience : " we ſhould in ſuch a caſe have been no " better than the angels ; and *doubtleſs* † a " virtuous man ſhall be one day much ſu- " perior."

In the ſecond volume of his work, this writer had embraced another ſyſtem. " We " may lay it down, ſays he, as a maxim, " that the firſt movements of nature are al-

† However flattering to human vanity this bold aſſertion, we wait for the proof from our author; and own ourſelves ſtrangers to any ſuch deduction from *ſcripture*, whence alone ſuch proof can be drawn.

" ways

" ways right: there is no *original depra-*
" *vity* in the human heart. We find in it
" no one vice, of which we cannot ſay how
" and by what means it gained an entrance
" there."

The contradiction of theſe two paſſages is eaſily perceived: in this, Rouſſeau pretends that man is born without ſpot or impurity; and in the other, he acknowledges, that he is not ſo born, and that his firſt freedom has been infringed. But, as he is very far from imputing the cauſe of this defect to *an original ſin*, he ſeeks it amongſt the vain conjectures, furniſhed by his imagination: conjectures which have no other tendency than to annihilate the belief of that original ſin, under the ſpecious pretence of procuring to man a more ſublime degree of happineſs, and of adding a greater luſtre to his virtue.

In order to ſhew this author the temerity of thoſe his *modeſt conjectures*, and, at the ſame time, to eſtabliſh the proofs of the Chriſtian Religion; let us follow man from his cradle to the tomb.

The ſtate of Infancy conſidered.

§. I. How amazing a ſpectacle is that of our infancy! The grief and pains, which it coſts to give us birth, are a ſure prediction of the miſeries into which we are about to enter! Incapable of expreſſing, by our ſpeech, what we feel and are; cries and lamentation immediately proclaim our evils and afflictions. Wretched from this firſt moment of exiſtence, without knowing we are ſo, and without being conſcious, that we do exiſt; how worthy is our condition of tears and compaſſion!

Truth.

§. II. Born with reaſon, which exalts our nature above that of every other created being in the univerſe:—how long do we continue without any power to uſe it? Deep buried in the ſenſes, how many labours, and painful efforts doth it coſt that reaſon, ere ſhe can unfold herſelf? We are formed for the knowledge of the truth; we ardently deſire it: we bend forward to reach it with all the powers of our ſouls: and yet this bleſſing, ſo natural, and ſo analogous, flies afar off and eſcapes us. Would we embrace, and attend to it? It's luſtre dazzles and confounds us; our weak and dim ſight cannot

ſupport

ſupport it's ſplendor, and we are forced to quit the poſſeſſion of it, even in the very inſtant, when we might hope to hold and retain, what we had purſued. But this is a mere ſuperficial deſcription of the difficulties we have to ſurmount in the ſearch after truth. Every object amuſes, ſeduces and deceives us. *Our imagination* through it's falſe reports; *our ſenſes*, by their illuſions, and fatal impreſſions; *cuſtom* and *opinions*, by means of the ſad empire they exerciſe upon our underſtandings: all things, within and without, lay ſnares to entrap us. *Error*, in order the better to miſlead us, avails itſelf of the very ardor which we entertain for the attainment of truth; and, through the moſt deplorable of all miſchances, that truth itſelf, which alone we love and ſearch after, becomes to us an occaſion of every kind of deception. We involve ourſelves in the groſſeſt miſtakes; and for the whole harveſt of our inquiries, and our labours, often reap only the moſt falſe and extravagant opinions, which yet we embrace with as much avidity, as though they were the moſt important truths.

Happiness.

§. III. This is the melancholy situation of man, left to himself, with respect to truth. If, from thence, we pass on to the *happiness* which he pursues with his whole soul's attention, with what an amazing inconsistency will the discovery surprize us! He passionately longs to be happy; and what various means does he employ to that end? His mind never inclines him to the least advance, in which it hath not this object full in view. It is the basis, motive and end of all his actions: this stirs him up, and keeps him continually in exercise. This transports him to so many different engagements: — what efforts, what anxieties, what hard and toilsome trials, harrass him; all undergone, in order to obtain that grand object to which his whole heart is devoted!

But, O capricious *happiness*; how widely distant dost thou still appear from us! Thy prospect animates, and supports us; the strong desire of finding thee holds us in perpetual agitation: we are ever hoping to meet with, and to seize fast upon thee; and yet thou ever flieſt from us, and always eludest our expecting search; when again we

we fall into our ſtate of wretchedneſs, with a freſh ſenſe of anguiſh and diſguſt! Who, ſince the beginning of the world, could ever flatter himſelf, with having arrived by the light of his reaſon, and the aſſiſtances of nature, at that joyful goal to which every human being aſpires? Princes and people, great and ſmall, learned and unlearned, young and old, of every age, and of every country, all alike bewail the having wearied themſelves in fruitleſs ſearch after a happineſs, which yet they ſolicit with the utmoſt fervency.

But, it is ſtill more lamentably ſtrange, and clearly diſcovers the perverſeneſs and depravity of man, that every thing, the moſt vile and contemptible which nature can preſent to us, hath uſurped in man the place of his true deſignation and happineſs. Stars, elements, plants, animals, wars, crimes, and diſorders, have all become good in his eſtimation; have all been made uſe of, in order to repair and ſupply that real good which he hath loſt. Nay, even the very deſtruction of happineſs, hath appeared to him, a means, likely to procure it.

Behold here, then, the melancholy condition of man, as well with reſpect to felicity, as with reſpect to truth: he loves truth; he deſires to poſſeſs her; and finds within him nought but darkneſs, confuſion of ideas, and boundleſs uncertainty: he ſeeks for happineſs, and he finds nothing but a prodigious concurrence of miſeries of every ſort. Is it not viſible from hence that man has erred, that he is fallen from his firſt eſtate?—Why do we purſue happineſs, with this greedineſs, and this impotency, unleſs man formerly enjoyed, a *real* happineſs? a happineſs, of which the veſtige alone now remains; a vaſt vacuity! which he vainly endeavours to ſupply, from every object that ſurrounds him. "Every thing, as the "great Paſchal obſerves, teſtifies that man is "a king, but a king dethroned; who bears "in his boſom a continual conſciouſneſs of "his former ſtate, and who, in ſpight of "all his efforts to ſubdue it, preſerves a "ſtrong deſire of being reſtored." There are ſtill apparent in him the remains of his former greatneſs, and ſome certain tokens of his ancient dignity. But it is alſo evident, and man proclaims it in every circumſtance, that

that he hath been degraded, deſpoiled and baniſhed, becauſe he hath become a prevaricator: for, certainly, unleſs man were in a depraved ſtate; and, unleſs he were a ſinner, he would enjoy truth and happineſs in the fulleſt ſecurity. And if man had never been other than corrupt, he could not entertain a ſingle idea either of truth or happineſs.

But, wretched as we are! we do entertain an idea of happineſs, and yet cannot attain it. We perceive the fair image of truth, but we only poſſeſs the ſhadow: incapable either of abſolute ignorance, or certain knowledge, thus much is manifeſt, "that we have been in a ſtate of perfection, "from which we are miſerably fallen!"

§. IV. In order to prove this matter fully, let us conſider the vaſt unweildineſs, and extent of that dreadful yoke, which oppreſſeth the ſons of Adam. From the moment of our birth, our ſenſes have rebelled againſt reaſon: ſhe finds herſelf tyrannically ſwayed by the fleſh, to which our ſouls become ſlaves. All the paſſions, ſucceſſively, domineer over us, and frequently all of them together. Plunged in the darkneſs of a profound ignorance, and ſmitten with the wound

The dominion of Fleſh and Senſe over Reaſon.

wound of univerſal concupiſcence, we heſitate to perform our principal duties, and are wavering every moment. The leaſt advantage is often productive of inſurmountable difficulties: and evil, how enormous ſoever, hath powerfully-ſeducing attractions to miſguide us. Our thoughts are all inclined to ill, previous to the commiſſion of it by an act of the will. All our faculties are vitiated and defiled. We perceive within us a continual war: our breaſts are all ſedition and rebellion! Every object oppoſeth the good we would practiſe; and every object carries and inclines us to the evil, which we fly from and deteſt; an heavy and galling weight under which we are obliged inceſſantly to ſtruggle, keeps us continually bent toward earthly and ſenſible objects. In one word, Man, formed to be *ſpiritual*, even while in the fleſh, becauſe the mind ought to preſide there; is become *carnal* in his very mind, becauſe the fleſh, by ſubduing it, exerciſes over it a tyrannical dominion; a ſecret and unaccountable pride, torments us without end, gnaws upon, and devours us; it's ſubtle ſhifts and hidden turnings, make a perpetual ſport of us: every thing aſſiſts it: it accompliſhes it's ends, even while

while we carry it about us; and in it's very defeat finds new cauſe of triumph. It's poiſon leaves within us only the ſhadow and appearance of that virtue of which it diſpoſes at pleaſure; and, ſuffering us at moſt only to retain the pomp and outſide ſhow, continually works to the ruin of it's ſpirit and reality. Theſe manifold evils and afflictions are not common merely to ſome few: they are the general lot of all men: all mankind are deeply ſenſible of their force and influence. The moſt virtuous, and the moſt vigilant over their own conduct, are they who feel them moſt. They every day experience theſe fatal propenſities of vicious and corrupt nature; propenſities, which become the ſubject of their continual ſorrow and oppoſition. What then doth all this ſcene of chaos, and monſtrous confuſion proclaim to us, but the certainty of the two conditions of man! They ſpeak to us in a voice ſo loud and powerful, that it is impoſſible to withſtand their evidence.

Vain is the endeavour to perſuade man, that he is not fallen from his firſt eſtate! His daily experience, his own proper feelings

ings give a formal lye to thoſe groſs impoſtors who would thus aim to amuſe and to deceive him.

Man, in his natural eſtate, is ſo hideous and formidable in his own eyes, that he cannot ſupport the view: he cannot behold or conſider his condition without terror. This is the ſource and cauſe of thoſe perpetual agitations, wherein his whole life is paſſed. His only ſtudy is to forget his very exiſtence, by buſying his mind, with ſuch a variety of objects, as may divert ſelf-conſideration. As he finds nothing within him, which can give him ſatisfaction; as he perceives there, nothing but what afflicts him; he avoids ſelf-knowledge; and, by an application to external purſuits, anxiouſly ſeeks to loſe ſight of his real condition, and to ſhake from his mind the reflexion of his exceſſive miſeries. Would you render man miſerable? Condemn him to ſilence and retirement, and oblige him to live by himſelf. — He will preſently deplore his ſituation, becauſe being intirely confined to his own cogitations, he will feel himſelf oppreſſed with the full burden of his miſery. It is this too which

makes

makes impriſonment ſo horrible a puniſhment to men, and is the cauſe why few perſons are able to reliſh the ſweets of ſolitude.

What a phœnomenon, what a prodigy of inconſiſtency then, is man! He loves himſelf, and himſelf alone; yet can he not face his own mind, without immediately falling into ſadneſs and chagrin. Whatever he may ſeek for from without, ſelf-gratification is the ſole end of his purſuit; and he hates nothing ſo much as to be left alone. He flies from himſelf with the greateſt caution, and is rejoiced to bury reflexion in forgetfulneſs. Let us not wonder at all this; he finds in himſelf only an abundance of inevitable calamities, and a total defection from every real and ſolid good. But, how vain and ſuperficial is man, whom, amidſt ſo many juſt occaſions of diſquietude, the meereſt trifle can amuſe! Blind that he is, he places all his happineſs in the purſuit of phantoms; of objects ſo vile and deſpicable, as would be incapable of engaging his attention, had he not loſt the reliſh and ſenſe of true felicity! "What "a chimera then is man!" as the great Paſchal exclaims. "What a novelty! what a

"chaos

" chaos of inconſiſtency! what a ſlave to " contradiction! arbiter of all ſublunary " things; and yet a feeble worm! The re- " poſitory of truth; yet a maſs of uncertainty! " The glory and the diſgrace of the uni- " verſe! If he is puffed up, I can abaſe him; " if he humbleth himſelf, I can exalt him: " and am able continually to confute what " ever he may urge, even till he ſhall fully " underſtand, and acknowledge himſelf to " be an incomprehenſible creature *."

* Dr. YOUNG, in his Night Thoughts, expreſſes himſelf in nearly the ſame manner:

How poor! how rich! how abject! how auguſt!
How complicate! how wonderful, is man!
How paſſing wonder, HE who made him ſuch!
Who centred in our make ſuch ſtrange extremes!
From different natures marvellouſly mix'd,
Connexion exquiſite of diſtant worlds!
Diſtinguiſh'd *link* in being's endleſs chain!
Mid-way from *nothing* to the *Deity!*
A beam ethereal, ſully'd, and abſorb'd!
Though ſullied, and diſhonour'd, ſtill divine!
Dim miniature of greatneſs abſolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of duſt!
Helpleſs immortal! Inſect *infinite!*
A worm! a God! —I tremble at myſelf,
And in myſelf am loſt; At home a ſtranger,
Thought wanders up and down, ſurpriz'd, aghaſt,
And wond'ring at her *own:* How reaſon reels!
O what a miracle to man is *man!*

Night I. p. 6. 8vo edit.

§. IV.

§ IV. The evils and calamities I have deſcribed, are not the only ones, where-with we are afflicted. How many others, of a different kind, concur with them, to conſtitute that torrent of wretchedneſs, which, from infancy, overwhelms our life! An inviſible power inceſſantly purſues us, and allows us no intermiſſion. We are delivered from one ſpecies of affliction, but to plunge into another, more painful and grievous. Fear and trouble, terror and conſternation, are ſo many executioners following us, as malefactors: where-ever we go, we enjoy no repoſe, night or day. When every object around us appears calm and tranquil, and we begin to recreate ourſelves after the toils of day; ſcarcely have we taſted the ſweet comforts of a firſt ſlumber, ere wakeful and wandering imagination preſents us with monſters and phantoms of every kind: and we find ourſelves like a daily centinel, kept in continual watchfulneſs. Now we ſeem to be purſued, by a furious enemy, as in a day of battle; and can only defend ourſelves againſt this circumſtance of fear, by waking ſuddenly in ſurprize. No ſooner are we thus extricated from ſo unaccountable, Man's unavoidable Evils.

countable a fright, than freſh amazement ſeizes us at having perceived ſo much danger, in the midſt of perfect ſecurity.

What ſhall we ſay of thoſe intolerable diſeaſes, which are the portion of all fleſh? who can count the multiplied pains, and torments, we every day ſuffer in our bodies? We die every inſtant; and, to complete our unhappineſs, that body which is in a ſtate of continual corruption and decay, makes the ſoul feel the full burden of it's infirmities; damps and depreſſes all it's nobler faculties; and, depriving it of the little vigour which remains with it, almoſt incapacitates it for every application. Were it deſirous to elevate itſelf to the contemplation of celeſtial truths; the body, languiſhing, and ſurcharged with anguiſh, blunts the edge of it's ardor, and cauſes it ſpeedily to fall back to ſenſual objects, while again immerſed in thoſe low proſpects, which before engaged his attention, man is diſabled from detecting a heart which miſleads him, and an underſtanding which gives him up to diſſipation.

In ſhort, through ſuch innumerable evils, man, fond as he is, of life, arrives at death; that death, of which his nature entertains ſo much horror: and what is that death? frequently tragical, accidental, or barbarouſly inhuman; by the ſword, or through oppreſſion; by peſtilence or famine; and by all the deſtroying ſcourges of divine vengeance. Is not the whole univerſe evidently a mere aſſembly of offenders, led by the juſtice of God, through an infinity of ſufferings, previouſly to thoſe various puniſhments, whereby he hath ſentenced them to final execution? "Grant, then, O pride! what a paradox thou art even to thyſelf. Be humble, O feeble reaſon! and thou, weak nature! be huſhed in ſilence. Learn, that man's ſtate in exiſtence, infinitely exceed his comprehenſion; and be inſtructed by thy maſter in that thy true condition, whereof thou art inevitably ignorant! *"

§ VI. Now, let Rouſſeau inform us, if he can, how, under the providence of a juſt God, the human race could be thus overwhelmed with innumerable evils, unleſs it Proofs of original Depravity.

* See Paſcal's Thoughts.

were culpable from it's birth. Obſerve, will we repeat to him, after St. Auguſtine.— Obſerve that toilſome ſtate of infancy; with what various ills it is oppreſſed! amidſt what vanieties, what pains, what errors and fears, doth it make it's way! When grown up to man's eſtate, and deſirous to be wholly conſecrate to the ſervice of our GOD, how many dangerous temptations aſſail us! The temptations of error, which would fain ſeduce us; of pleaſure, which powerfully conſtrains us; Of anxiety and vexation, which deject us; and of pride, which inflates, and lifts us up! Who is able to looſe this ponderous yoke, wherewith all the children of Adam are galled? or who could entertain a belief, that under a good, and a juſt GOD, they would ſuffer ſo many afflictions, unleſs original offence, had preceded the puniſhment? There is no middle way of reſolving this propoſition: either GOD is impotent or unjuſt, or man is culpable *.

Rouſſeau unites with us in aſſerting, That "a being, capable of doing every thing,

* *Quid igitur reſtat? niſi ut cauſa iſtorum malorum ſit, aut iniquitas, vel impotentia Dei, aut pœna primi veteriſque peccati?* [St. Auguſtin.]

"cannot

" cannot *will* to do any thing but what is " *right* ;" that, " The being who is infi- " nitely good, becauſe he is infinitely pow- " erful, muſt alſo be ſupremely juſt, other- " wiſe he would be inconſiſtent with him- " ſelf : for that love of order, which pro- " duces it, we call *goodneſs* ; and that love " of order, which preſerveth it, we call " *juſtice.** " Since therefore the Deity (by Rouſſeau's own declaration) is neither *unjuſt* nor *impotent* : let him join with us in confeſſing, that ſo grievous andheavy a yoke, would never have been impoſed upon the ſons of Adam, from their nativity to the grave, if they had not merited the infliction by the offence of their firſt parents. For could a Deity, who is ſo great a lover of order, be the author of that diſorder, which we perceive in every circumſtance of our nature ? Could he have formed man with all thoſe perverſe inclinations which every day more fully diſcover themſelves ? With that amazing propenſity, which inclines him to ſubmit himſelf, to every thing, but his rightful Lord ? Can thoſe various inconſiſtencies, which are

* See Vol. III. p. 64.

united in our nature, derive themſelves from the clear ſource of *his* wiſdom? Who could be impiouſly daring enough to affirm, that the GOD of holineſs, excites in our breaſts all thoſe continual conflicts of the fleſh againſt the ſpirit? and that general rebellion of all the paſſions? — That it is he who kindleth within us thoſe firey darts of concupiſcence, which conſume us, notwithſtanding all our efforts to extinguiſh them? Who could be ſo daring, and ſenſeleſs, to pretend that the GOD of innocence end purity, writeth that law of ſin in our members, which is always warring againſt the law of reaſon, and of the ſpirit? That he foments, and feeds within them, all thoſe enſnaring inclinations, which, ſometimes with an hidden, ſometimes with an open force, urge and incite us, by the allurement of ſenſible objects? In ſhort, can that univerſal depravity, and diſſoluteneſs, which inceſſantly diffuſe the moſt impure exhibitions from the gulph of the clayey manſion we inhabit; which uſe every effort to captivate, and ſubdue to their biaſs, the image of our Lord: and completely to exterminate, whatever advantages of our firſt ſtate we continue to enjoy: — Can a ſource thus polluted, can a cauſe thus fertile of calamities,

lamities, thus worthy of our tears, and ſorrow: — Can this have any other origin, than the general defection of our nature?

§. VII. But ſtill Rouſſeau urges, in order to elude the force of all theſe conſiderations: " For what reaſon my ſoul is thus, &c.— " and the fair teſtimony of an approving " conſcience." *See p.* 1. Rouſſeau refuted.

Now what a ſtrange and incompetent method is this, of explaining the cauſe of all thoſe numberleſs evils which beſet us! What! muſt we then make out the Deity to be unjuſt, that man may appear juſt and good? and can any one ſay, he is not unjuſt, if he puniſheth innocent man, before he hath incurred puniſhment? — To afflict and puniſh him, for no other end, than that of rendering him capable of merit, and of virtue, is a pretence unworthy GOD's greatneſs and love: — *For as much then as thou art righteous thyſelf, thou ordereſt all things righteouſly; thinking it not agreeable with thy power to condemn him, who hath not deſerved to be puniſhed.* Wiſd. xii. 15. Reaſon concurs with faith to eſtabliſh this truth: and the idea which Rouſſeau a little above

ſketches out to us, cannot be reconciled with this his chimerical conjecture. What impiety is it to ſuppoſe, that the thrice holy GOD, could render the purity of the innocent ſpotted and impure, and could begin, by cauſing us to forfeit the merit of innocence, in order to the making us forego that of victory and patience! Surely this is an impoſſibility which muſt ever exiſt! If GOD be the author of that revolution which hath taken place in our nature: if it be HE who hath excited that rebellion there, of which we have a continual experience: — then man ought no longer to fight againſt himſelf; and his concupiſcence proceeding wholly from GOD, cannot be an evil, which he ought to oppoſe. Let him then give himſelf up to it's direction: let him reſign himſelf to it's pleaſure: to reſiſt it would be injuring the work of GOD, would be to oppoſe thoſe emotions wherewith HE inſpires us. From henceforth, therefore, no more let human laws pretend to arrogate a right of ſuppreſſing the outward effects of our vicious appetites. Is it their province to mend that which the Deity hath ordained, and to change the ſacred inſtitution of our nature? Thus Rouſſeau's

modeſt

modeſt conjectures tend to overthrow, and confound every thing, to give a ſanction to all crimes and diſorders, to idolize and ſanctify all our unruly paſſions, and to open a full and free career to licentiouſneſs!

But to proceed. Let Rouſſeau ſhew us what application he would make of his *modeſt conjectures* concerning the ſtate of infants. For what reaſon, will we aſk him, is this infancy oppreſſed with ſo many afflictions? why given up to ſo many griefs and pains, and why covered with ſo many vices and imperfections? why, as it is then with-held from the uſe of reaſon, doth it frequently happen, that it doth not recover it even in the moſt advanced age? Rouſſeau ſurely cannot anſwer us, that all this is calculated for the trial of virtue: ſince the condition of infancy renders it incapable of every exerciſe of virtue; and it is therefore no more ſuſceptible of merit than of demerit. — How then could the juſt GOD, afflict our infancy with ſo many calamities? How could a Deity thus good, diſcharge againſt his own image, all the arrows of his anger, at a time too, wherein it could not, through it's own ill

conduct, have merited his chaſtiſement, or derive from thence any advantage; — unleſs that image, in the perſon of it's repreſentative, had appeared in his eyes, criminal, and therefore worthy to be thus ſmitten and afflicted? Let the miſeries then of infancy, conſtrain Rouſſeau to admit original ſin, unleſs he apprehends the Deity can be unjuſt.

Notions of the ancient Philoſophers reſpecting human depravity.

§. VIII. This view of all the evils we undergo from our nativity till death, forced the heathen philoſophers, who had never heard of original ſin, to affirm and teach; that we were placed in this world, for the ſole purpoſe of receiving the puniſhment due to ſins committed in another life: and that the body was a puniſhment to the ſoul, ſimilar to that inflicted by the *Etrurian* pirates upon their captives, who faſtened them, while living, to carcaſſes already dead. Theſe philoſophers conceived, that ſuch a puniſhment could not have exiſted in a world governed by a righteous Deity, without ſome precedent crime which had merited it: and this conſideration obliged them to grant to ſouls a life exempt from the body; in which life, taking it for granted that they

they had abandoned themſelves to ſin and diſorder; they concluded, that they were precipitated into this priſon of the body; and ſo into all thoſe miſeries, conſequent on that abjection, in order to ſatisfy the divine juſtice.

This is the cleareſt account thoſe men could give of the matter, who were ignorant of the fall of mankind, in it's firſt repreſentative. But, as this pre-exiſtence of ſouls had no other reality than in their imagination; as there is no ſolid foundation to ſupport the opinion; and as it is contradicted, by the light of reaſon, as well as our natural feelings: what more rational option remains, than to admit original ſin; which, though it be in a great meaſure incomprehenſible, is however the ſimpleſt, and the only means to reconcile every thing, to our minds? Without admitting this, what judgment can we form of the ordinary imperfections of mankind; imperfections, which are born and grow up with them? How elſe can we fail to regard GOD as their author, or what method can we make uſe of to reconcile a mixture of ſo much nobility

lity and excellence, with ſo vaſt a fund of meanneſs and imbecility ?

But every thing clears up, from the moment, I am aſſured, that the condition, in which I behold man now, is not the condition wherein his GOD at firſt placed him. My wonder ceaſes, when I behold him as a rebellious and degraded ſubject in a ſtate of wretchedneſs. I no longer find a *contrariety* in the work of GOD ; I find none, ſave in what remains of this great fabric, and thoſe alterations, wrought in it by the ſin of man. From the moment I am informed of the change which has happened in my original condition ; from the moment I am aſſured, that I am born a ſinner ; all my doubts vaniſh, my perplexities diſappear, and the difficulties which embarraſſed me, are diſſipated.

Rouſſeau vainly attempts to juſtify providence againſt certain philoſophers, who venture to impugn it. He never can effect his purpoſe, ſolidly and completely, without laying down original guilt as the firſt principle ; without that aſſiſtance, while he would avoid one rock, he muſt neceſſa-

he

rily ſtrike upon another. The Atheiſt and the Materialiſt will alway be throwing inſurmountable difficulties in his way: what God is this, will they aſk him, who without any cauſe or reaſon for ſo doing, has created us with a body, naked, feeble, infirm and mortal? what is the nature of that *ſoul*, that ſpiritual inhabitant, which, without having committed crime or offence, is become like the beaſts that periſh, which terrors diſconcert and annoy, which pains inceſſantly agitate and diſturb, and which is triumphed over, and ſubdued by, the moſt unruly appetites and paſſions.

§. VIII. I will readily grant, that nothing more highly irritates our weak reaſon, than this great myſtery of the tranſmiſſion of a ſin committed ſo many ages ſince. But, if our underſtandings cannot fathom it, the deplorable ſtate of human nature, renders it obvious, and that idea which we entertain of a juſt and good God, makes it indiſpenſible; a God, who cannot wilfully render the innocent unhappy, or torment them merely out of a wanton caprice. Thus the obſcurity of the principal point is

Difficulties in the doctrine of original ſin unavoidable

is explained and cleared up, by the evidence and demonſtration of two concluſions, eſſentially connected with it.

It is true, the *manner* in which this ſin has paſſed down to us, is veiled in obſcurity: but let us grant too, that even from this ſo cloudy a point, there ſprings a ray which gives a light to the whole matter. And if, becauſe we cannot fully comprehend it, we are therefore obſtinately to reject it; we ſhould further obſerve, that we have not clearer knowledge of any other thing in the world. GOD, man, and the univerſe, quickly ſink down into that abyſs of obſcurity, whence we are unable to draw any diſcovery: whereas the ſubmiſſion of our reaſon, in this ſingle particular, is rewarded with the knowledge of a multitude of others; every thing elſe becomes clear and evident; the Deity, man, and the univerſe are held forth to us in a point of view, wherein all which was before latent, is readily diſcerned.

Some few reflexions more, will ſtill better demonſtrate to us, the equity of thoſe judgments

judgments exerciſed upon us by the Deity, in the communication of original ſin: they completely ſhew how ill the infidel is authorized to pretend that the doctrine of original ſin, is contrary to ſound reaſon.

We all know the love and tenderneſs which GOD hath implanted in parents towards their children; we know that the pains which their children undergo are more afflictive and more ſenſibly felt by parents than their own, they would readily ſacrifice their own life to preſerve that of their offſpring; becauſe they wiſh to live for them only; and their utmoſt deſire is to behold themſelves renewed in their perſons, and to render them one day happy. Now this paternal character muſt ſurely be moſt clearly exemplified in that being, who was not only the firſt father, but alſo the father by way of eminence, as being appointed that of all mankind. In order therefore to render Adam fully happy or miſerable, according as his faithfulneſs or infidelity to his GOD ſhould deſerve, *he* muſt neceſſarily have been able to communicate happineſs or miſery to his deſcendants. He would have been

been but imperfectly happy, could he have beheld his poſterity become miſerable; and, in like manner, his puniſhment would have been too gentle, if his children had not been comprized in his misfortunes; and thus we ſee, that, after having tranſgreſſed that eaſy command which GOD had impoſed on him, in order to try his obedience; It was juſt he ſhould receive puniſhment, not in his own perſon only, but in that alſo of his children; as being the deareſt portion of his ſubſtance, and more cloſely knit to him in affection, than even his own members. The future deſcendants from this our firſt parent, deriving their exiſtence only through him, became therefore the juſt objects of the divine diſpleaſure and vengeance. All being comprized in *one*, all became ſinful through one: and, accordingly, this unfortunate parent hath been puniſhed in all the children *comprehended in his perſon*, from the firſt to the lateſt generations.

In order to ſee a lively repreſentation of this juſtice of the Deity, let us conſider a little, the deciſions of *human* equity. A father being degraded, all his dignity is loſt

both

both to himſelf and to his children, thoſe unborn, as well as thoſe who are in being: in him they all forfeit their fortunes, and all the advantages of *civil ſociety*; becauſe the offence of their father hath occaſioned their deprivation of them. What then have they done to merit ſuch treatment, which we have not equally done to merit thoſe diſpenſations which we experience, in conſequence of our deſcent from our firſt anceſtor? And what right have we boldly to find fault with, and criticiſe upon, the unfathomable decrees of divine juſtice; decrees whoſe veſtiges we trace even in the inferior ordinances of men, and which, notwithſtanding no one would dare to condemn? What wrong or injury have we received at the hands of GOD? He created the firſt man ſo perfect, he rendered the taſk ſo eaſy to him of preſerving to himſelf and all his poſterity, that immenſe treaſure which he had committed to his own perſonal diſpoſal; that we cannot ſurely complain at ſeeing our deſtiny involved in Adam's; and eſpecially as none of us can ſay he hath not acted, morally ſpeaking, with him as one and the ſame perſon. Could we flatter ourſelves, that

that we ſhould have made a better uſe of the divine gifts and bleſſings than he did? could we, on our parts, promiſe more fidelity and perſeverence in duty than that maſter-piece of divine omnipotence diſplayed? Had he continued in that place wherein his GOD placed him, he would, in conſequence, have been *rewarded* in all his poſterity. Original righteouſneſs would have been a common inheritance, and we ſhould all then have bleſſed the divine goodneſs, for having comprized in him the happineſs of the human race. Why therefore, having in the perſon of that common father, forfeited that felicity, which he was inveſted with, for our ſakes as well as his own: why — now that human nature is become ſinful in it's branches, becauſe it hath become ſo in it's original ſtock — why will we riſe up rebellious againſt divine juſtice, and ſuffer a blind, raſh and unruly reaſon, to dive into it's unfathomable depth? we have loſt nothing to whichwe had any claim of right; why do we complain? we poſſeſs many bleſſings which are free gifts; why are we not thankful?

§. IX.

§. X. Inſtead, then, of complaining and murmuring againſt the determinations of divine juſtice, let us adore them trembling; let us gratefully acquieſce in the decree pronounced upon us; and bleſs that mercy which is offered to us: our misfortune is not without reſource: let us deplore it, but yet let us conſole ourſelves under it. Divine mercy hath prepared for us a ſuperabundant remedy. Scarcely had we become ſinners in the perſon of our firſt parent, when GOD, full of love and tenderneſs for his creatures; notwithſtanding all that unutterable debaſement which he was to undergo, condeſcended to encourage us by the promiſe of a redeemer. He immediately aſſures man, that his crime ſhall be expiated by a mediator, who, being in unity with his own eſſence, will reconcile man with his GOD. In and through this divine perſon, ſhall man triumph over the enemy, who hath ſubdued him; and by means of the victory which he ſhall gain, man ſhall recover his ancient rights and privileges; and all thoſe advantages which he had forfeited, ſhall

Original ſin fully remedied by redemption

be reſtored to him, with uſury and ample reſtitution.

Such are the grand objects which the *Chriſtian Religion* holds up to our view: objects, how truly worthy our attention and our diſcuſſion! The *Chriſtian Religion* extricates us from all that uncertainty into which mankind were ſo long involved, with reſpect to their condition. This accounts for all thoſe amazing contrarieties, which unite in our nature, and explains that enigma, which not all the ſagacity of the greateſt philoſophers could inveſtigate. This diſcovers to us the true ſtate of our nature, it's dignity and baſeneſs; it's excellence and it's miſery; by demonſtrating that man is degraded and depraved; that he hath loſt that intimate communion with his God which he once enjoyed; that purity and innocence, that ſhining light, that ſublime knowledge, wherewith he was once endued. And, that, by reaſon of his fall, he hath plunged himſelf into that abyſs of vice and licenciouſneſs, of indigence and wretchedneſs, wherein we behold him at this day.

But

But it ſtops not with expoſing to man his misfortunes, and pointing out their ſource: it moreover prevents that deſpondency, into which the view of ſo much miſery might poſſibly precipitate him: offers to him ſovereign remedies, and ſhews him the certain means of obtaining them.

Can we, then, with-hold our utmoſt love and eſteem from a *Religion*, which reveals ſuch glad tidings to the ſoul of man! Can we fail, at the firſt glance of it, to deſire an inſight into the true and ſolid foundations of a *Religion*, which aſſures us of *remedies*, ſo deſirable, ſo ſalutary, and ſo efficacious?

Of the true and ſolid foundations of this *Religion*, we propoſe to ſpeak, in anſwer eſpecially to the objections made by M. Rouſſeau; and as he, with other unbelievers, ſtrongly controverts the neceſſity not only of this, but of all *Revelation*, our next diſſertation ſhall be employed to ſhew fully that neceſſity.

DISSERTATION II.

On the NECESSITY of REVELATION.

Strictures on Rouſſeau.

WE now proceed to conſider the *proofs* in favour of the *Chriſtian Religion*; and, in order the more firmly to eſtabliſh their evidence, will give ſome attention to the fallacious methods which the author of Emilius hath made uſe of to deſtroy them.

After having preſſed ſeveral leſſons upon his young pupil, Emilius: he addreſſes his diſcourſe to him in the following terms: "You will find my expoſition [juſt before "promiſed] treat of nothing more than "*Natural Religion:* it is very ſtrange that "we ſhould ſtand in need of any other! "By what means ſhall I find out ſuch ne- "ceſſity? How can I be blameable for "ſerving GOD agreeably to the dictates of "the underſtanding which he hath given "me, and the ſentiments he hath implanted "in my heart? What purity of morals, "what ſyſtem of faith, uſeful to man, or

"honourable

" honourable to his Creator, can I deduce " from any poſitive doctrine, which I can- " not as well deduce without it's aſſiſtance, " by a proper application of my natural fa- " culties? Let any one ſhew me what can " be added, either for the glory of GOD, " the good of ſociety, or my own advan- " tage, to the duties injoined us by the " law of nature; let him ſhew me what " virtue any new mode of worſhip can pro- " duce, which is not alſo the conſequence " of mine? The moſt ſublime ideas of the " Deity are inculcated upon us by reaſon " alone. Take a view of the works of na- " ture, liſten to the voice within; and then " tell me what GOD hath omitted to ſay to " your eyes, your conſcience, or your under- " ſtanding; where are the men who can " tell us more of him, than he thus tells us " of himſelf *?"

What wilful blindneſs is here diſcoverable in Rouſſeau, thus to pretend to controvert the neceſſity of Revelation! Was not the contemplation of his own mind ſufficient to have convinced him of it's abſolute neceſſity?

* Vol. III. p. 101.

What

What ſay thoſe doubts, and that uncertainty to him, which he experiences upon thoſe very principal points wherein he is forced to acquieſce? Do not they very clearly point out to him the abſolute neceſſity of Revelation?—Ought not Rouſſeau's perplexities reſpecting both our preſent and future ſtate; — his doubts concerning the ſoul's immortality *; his ignorance of the cauſe and origin of the world; his embarraſſment to determine whether the world be eternal, or created: whether there be only one cauſe of all things: or whether there be two, or many: — Thoſe inſurmountable difficulties he meets with, in his attempts to vindicate providence againſt materialiſm, and which oblige him to annihilate that providence, even while apparently defending it, which force him to diveſt it of it's moſt excellent prerogatives, by advancing, that "none of man's ſpontaneous actions enter "into the general ſyſtem of providence;" That "Providence doth not prevent man "from committing evil, either becauſe the "evil, which ſo impotent a Being is capable "of doing, is beneath it's notice, or be-

* See Emilius, Vol. III. Confeſſion of Faith.

"cauſe

" cauſe it cannot prevent that evil, without " laying a reſtraint upon man's liberty, and " cauſing a greater evil, by debaſing his " nature * : " — Ought not all theſe embarraſſments to have convinced Rouſſeau of the inutility of his efforts for the attainment of truth? He is obliged to confeſs his unſkilfulneſs, and his ignorance; and yet immediately afterwards he goes on to controvert the neceſſity of that remedy which alone is capable of ſupplying his deficiency: " The examination, which " I am now going to make, ſays he to his " pupil, ſpeaking of religion; is very dif- " ferent: preſenting to my view nothing " but *perplexity*, *myſterioufneſs* and *obſcurity*: " I enter on it, therefore, with great " diſtruſt and uncertainty, I almoſt tremble " to determine any thing upon the ſubject, " and ſhall rather inform you of my *doubts* " than of my opinions. — Let my diſcourſe, " however, carry with it no greater autho- " rity than that of reaſon: for, I own, " I am ignorant whether I am in the right " or wrong. Indeed, in all diſcuſſions, it

* See Vol. III. p. 60.

is

" is a difficult matter not to assume some-
" times an affirmative tone; but remember,
" that all my affirmations, in treating
" these subjects, are only *so many rational*
" *doubts* * : " and, but little above, Rousseau had told his Emilius, " The only thing,
" which under a just diffidence of myself,
" I request of GOD, — is, that he will
" correct my errors when I go astray. To
" be sincere, however, I do not think *my*
" *judgment infallible:* such of my opinions,
" as seem to be less founded, may, never-
" theless, be false; It is to no purpose,
" that the illusions by which I am misled,
" arise from myself; it is he alone can
" dissipate them. I have done every thing
" in my power to arrive at truth, but it's
" source is elevated beyond my reach †:
" if my faculties fail me with my progress,
" it is necessary for truth to stoop to my
" capacity ‡."

Rashly blind and proudly ignorant man! who sees not that he had rather possess the

* Vol. III. p. 100. † See the preceding dissertation. ‡ Vol. III. p. 98.

extravagant

extravagant opinions of a wild imagination, with the appearance of humble condeſcenſion, than be induced to have recourſe to a ſuperior intelligence; an intelligence, which would not ſuffer any of it's votaries to pride themſelves in the vanity of their mind! who ſees not that he prefers being fantaſtical and ſingular in his own ideas, however fooliſh and ridiculous, to the judging rationally with the multitude? How can he poſſibly ſtill ſtand out with us againſt the neceſſity of revelation, after having frankly confeſſed, that in religious matters, "His reaſon perceived nothing "but *perplexity*, *myſterioufneſs* and *obſcu-* "*rity*" that, "Therefore he entered into "the examination of them with abſolute "*diffidence* and *uncertainty*" that, "He "could not determine any thing upon the "ſubject without *trembling*," and after having declared that all his affirmations were but ſo many doubtful arguments: and that, "ſuch of his opinions as ſeemed to him "moſt plauſible, might, perhaps, be but "ſo many deceptions?" — Now does not all this convince us of the neceſſity of revelation; namely his rejecting that neceſſity

ceſſity in ſpite of acknowledgements ſo juſt and well founded? What! does our reaſon underſtand nothing of religious matters; finds ſhe nothing in them but embaraſſment, clouds and darkneſs; and ſhall ſhe, nevertheleſs, appear to us to be an indefective rule? ſhall we too, notwithſtanding this, be enabled through the aſſiſtance of that rule, to learn every tenet uſeful to man and honourable to his maker, which we could poſſibly derive from a poſitive doctrine? — What muſt that religion be, which is pregnant only with doubts, incertainties, ſuſpicious arguments, and, perhaps, mere falſhoods? Is it thus then, that Rouſſeau's God would be ſerved and adored? How excellently will that pupil be taught, whom ſuch a preceptor, as Rouſſeau, ſhall have inſtructed in doubts, uncertainties and falſhoods, as the ſum of religion! worthy leſſons, which, at beſt, can only tend to make his diſciple a learned and perfect ſceptic, with regard to every point of religion: It is not in this manner, that the great maſter of the *Chriſtian Religion,* forms and inſtructs his diſciples; if he ſpeaks to them, it is with the view to diſſipate their ignorance,

ignorance, to diſburden them of their doubts, to put an end to their uncertainties, and to baniſh from their minds, all error and falſe opinion. Thus doth HE ſpeak with authority, who by his works and his diſcourſes, clearly proves, that the right of inſtructing belongs to him alone: ſeeing that in him *dwell all the treaſures of knowledge and wiſdom*, and that he is the *truth itſelf*. But, Rouſſeau, (who pretends to the province of a Teacher, and would be the inſtructor of others; without believing himſelf at all neceſſitated to draw from this common and univerſal ſpring of ſcience) what, could he poſſibly propoſe to us, which muſt not demonſtrate him to be an unnatural commixture of doubts, uncertainty, and deluſion? can men ever be blind enough to prefer ſuch a maſter to that divine teacher, who propoſes the chriſtian religion to our faith and practiſe?

§. II. Rouſſeau is not the only one who proves to us the *neceſſity* of revelation: The darkneſs and errors of the whole univerſe, previous to the eſtabliſhment of the chriſtian

Ignorance of God proof of the want of revelation.

and

faith, depoſe highly in favour of this truth, and clearly convinces us of it.

Theſe are facts which ſpeak more intelligibly, than all the vain arguments of proud reaſon; the experience of whoſe impotence and dark ignorance through ſo many ages permits us no longer to attend to it's ſuggeſtions. What is more natural than for man, to acknowledge his GOD, his firſt cauſe and the ultimate object of his happineſs? This, all things publiſhed, all things proclaimed to him. The grand view of nature's works, failed not to point out to man his maſter and his maker. Daily loaded with his bleſſings and favours; every object carried his thoughts up to their great ſource: He was brought ſo near to him, that he might even feel him with his hand*, if we may be allowed the expreſſion; and yet, notwithſtanding all this, how hath he, — how hath he not diſgraced and diſparaged him? the ſun and ſtars; the fire and the other elements, were made the higheſt objects of public adoration; powerful kings, celebrated conquerors, and the authors of inventions uſeful in human life, ſoon afterwards received divine honours:

* See Acts xvii. 27.

all

all things were worſhiped even to very beaſts and reptiles; and the divine majeſty was transformed into every ſpecies of inſects, and animals; of beings material, and inſenſible: every thing as *Boſſuet* obſerves, became GOD, GOD himſelf excepted: and that world which GOD had created, for the manifeſtation of his power, ſeemed to have degenerated into a temple of idols.

Some acknowledged thoſe for their gods, which others held in deteſtation: every city and village had it's peculiar deities, and treated thoſe of other places with ſovereign contempt.

The wiſeſt and moſt enlightened nations, the Chaldeans, Ægyptians, Phœnicians, Greeks and Romans, were the moſt darkly ignorant, with reſpect to religious matters. So true it is, that, to be raiſed to the knowledge of thoſe things, a wiſdom more than human is required! Nay, mankind deviated into the paths of error ſo far, as even to deify their own vices and paſſions, and erect altars, and eſtabliſh a mode of worſhip, in honour of them. Who could venture to enumerate all

all the infamous ceremonies of thoſe *immortal* gods, with all their abominable myſteries of impunity? — Their intrigues, their barbarities, their jealouſies, and every other enormity, became the ſubject of their feaſts and ſacrifices. Hymns were chaunted to their praiſe; and pictures conſecrated in their temples. Thus was ſin adored, and deemed neceſſary to the worſhip of GOD. Every public ſervice was only a continual profanation, a ſolemn, and ſerious deriſion of the name of the true GOD. To theſe numberleſs corruptions, follies and extravagancies, they ſuper-added the moſt barbarous cruelty; ordinary victims were thought inſufficient to appeaſe their irritated gods; *human* blood muſt moreover be ſhed, and confounded with that of beaſts: Fathers were ſeen to ſacrifice their own offspring, to burn them before their eyes, and ſubſtitute the fume ariſing from their blood, in the place of incenſe. Theſe horrid ſacrifices were not peculiar to a few people: They were common to all nations without exception, men every where offered up their own ſpecies; nor was there a place upon the whole earth, where thoſe dreadful deities were

not

not adored, whoſe implacable hatred of the human race, exacted the ſacrifice of ſuch victims.

Amidſt darkneſs ſo thick, and ignorance ſo profound, men would alſo needs worſhip even the work of their own hands: they fancied themſelves able to ſhut up the divine ſpirit in ſtatues; and ſo abſolutely forgot the GOD who made them, as to fancy themſelves, in their turn, able to make a GOD! Who could believe this, if experience did not convince us, that an error thus ſtupid and groſs, was not only the moſt univerſal, but alſo the moſt inveterate and incorrigible amongſt mankind; ſo that we are compelled to acknowledge, to the deep diſgrace of human nature; "That the great-"eſt of all truths, which the whole created "world inculcates, and whoſe impreſſion is "the moſt powerful, was nevertheleſs the "moſt diſtant from the underſtanding and "perception of mankind."

§. III. Amongſt thoſe miſerably deceived mortals, who lived in the practice of all the above-mentioned crimes and diſorders, were The Ignorance and Inconſiſtency of Phi-

loſophers reſpecting GOD.

were the *Philoſophers*, who paſſed for the moſt wiſe and enlightened. Theſe men, whoſe reaſon had been cultivated by ſo many nightly watches, cares, and anxious ſtudies, being left to themſelves, plunged into every kind of abſurdity, into the groſſeſt errors, and the moſt extravagant opinions. It would require whole volumes to enumerate them. Every one made himſelf a GOD, after his own taſte: Some of them maintained, that the Deity did not, in any manner, intermeddle with what paſſed in the world. That all it's concerns were left to chance; and that it would be a taſk unworthy his dignity, and inconſiſtent with his repoſe, to trouble himſelf with that immenſe concourſe of events, and thoſe various intereſts, whereof the world is compoſed. Others of them ſubjected the GOD whom they had invented, to the fatal neceſſity of deſtiny, and made him dependant on laws foreign to his own. Many of them confounded dæmons with deities, and made no diſtinction between them. There were ſome of them who held that GOD was nothing diſtinct from the univerſe, being only the ſoul of this great body. — Another ſect invented *one* GOD, the

the author and principle of good, and another GOD, the ſource and cauſe of all evils and diſorders; and they ſet theſe two Gods at eternal enmity, to ſupport their reſpective rights and privileges. *Socrates*, that celebrated ſage, being accuſed of denying thoſe Gods whom the people adored, defended himſelf againſt the charge, as againſt a crime. *Plato*, ſpeaking of the God who had formed the univerſe ſays, it is difficult to inveſtigate his exiſtence, and that he ought not to be ſpoken of, but in a figure or parable.

§. IV. What monſtrous errors appear amongſt the philoſophers reſpecting the origin, and firſt cauſe of the world? Some of them imagined, that water was the firſt principle of all things; others thought it was the air or fire; and ſome of them aſſerted it's formation to be the effect of the four elements united. There were others, ſtill more dark and ſtupid, who pretended that the univerſe was eternal, and without beginning. Many conceived it to be formed by a fortuitous concourſe, a lucky jumble of firſt bodies, or atoms; and yet at the ſame

Reſpecting the origin of the world

time affirmed, that it had no commencement; while, according to others, all things were infinite and uncreated. The wiſeſt of theſe philoſophers, and thoſe who deviated leaſt from the truth, propoſed to us a GOD, who, meeting with a matter eternal, and ſelf-exiſtent like himſelf; depending on him neither in the foundation of it's nature, nor in it's firſt condition, ſet himſelf to work, and faſhioned it like a vulgar mechanic. Now, according to this extravagant ſyſtem, *Matter* is made equal with *the Deity*, and GOD himſelf becomes compelled and forced in his work, by this very matter, and by thoſe it's diſpoſitions, which he never concerted; and finds himſelf ſubjected to ſuch laws, as even he himſelf cannot infringe. Theſe pretended philoſophers, with all the intelligence their reaſon could afford them, were unable to comprehend that if matter were ſelf-exiſtent, it could not have derived it's perfection from a foreign hand; and that if GOD be perfect and infinite, nothing more could have been requiſite for the performance of whatever he would affect, than himſelf, and his own almighty will.

§. V. How

§. V. How many diſputes have ariſen amongſt theſe philoſophers, concerning our own nature and eſſence! Here, the ſoul was held a ſubtle being; There, a thin vapour. In one ſchool they made it out to be partly mortal, partly immortal; and in another they inſiſted, that it periſhed with the body. Many thought the ſoul was a portion of the divine nature, a deity itſelf, a being, eternal, uncreated, and which had neither beginning nor end. Some gave it an exiſtence previous to the body, into which it afterwards entered. What ſhall I ſay of thoſe who believed the tranſmigration of ſouls? who tranſported them from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, from felicity to miſery, from miſery to felicity again; who advanced, that they iſſued from one body, to inhabit ſucceſſively a multitude of others, from the body of man, to that of an horſe and animals of every ſpecies! — "According to theſe philoſophers," ſaid an ancient author, "I am at this day immortal, "and rejoice in being ſo: but preſently I "may become mortal and irrational; I "may ſpeedily be transformed into every Reſpecting the ſoul.

" kind of ſhape or perſon. I may become
" air, or fire, or water ; and then—almoſt
" inſtantaneouſly I am neither air, nor fire,
" nor water ; I am turned into a beaſt, am
" metamorphoſed to a fiſh ; and, in ſuc-
" ceſſive change, find I have tigers and
" dolphins in my fraternity. If I behold
" myſelf, the body which has been provided
" me, makes me afraid ; and I know not
" what name to give it : What ſhall I call
" it ? man, dog, or wolf, bull, bird or
" ſerpent, dragon or chimera ?—For thoſe
" my beforementioned ſage maſters, meta-
" morphoſe me into every ſort of animal,
" terreſtrial and aquatic, volatile, ſavage,
" and domeſtic, mute and vocal, brutal and
" rational. I ſwim, I fly, I am borne aloft
" in air, I crawl : I run, and I perch upon
" the leafy branches. But here comes the
" learned *Empedocles*, who will place me in
" the number of the trees."

Reſpecting the condition and deſignation of man.

§. VI. We ſhould never finiſh, were we to relate all the ridiculous and ſenſeleſs ſyſtems formed by the ancient philoſophers, upon the moſt important points : permit us, however, to ſpeak a word or two concerning

ing their opinions of the condition and final deſignation of man. Such of them, who had ſome ſmall knowledge of man's true ſtate and excellence (not able to reconcile that fund of grandeur and ſublimity, with that maſs of baſeneſs and indigence united in one and the ſame nature) attributed the mean ſentiments, which men naturally have of themſelves, to ingratitude, and puſillanimity. Others, on the contrary, who knew how real, and innate this mental baſeneſs is, have treated of thoſe noble ſentiments, ſo natural to man, with a ridiculous pride and oſtentation. The firſt, ignorant of the maladies incident to man, no leſs than of their remedies, have only laboured to augment them, by leading him to fancy himſelf equal with the Deity; and ſuggeſting to him, that through the exertion of his own ſagacity, he might render himſelf like GOD: on the other hand, the latter of theſe ſages, who perceived in man, nothing but what was baſe, vile, and contemptible, depreciated him, even to deſpair; and would fain have reduced him to the condition of the brute beaſts, by teaching him not to ſeek after any other

good, than thoſe gratifications, which are common to them.

The opinions of philoſophers reſpecting the happineſs and end of man, are almoſt numberleſs. Some of them taught, that it conſiſted in the pleaſures of ſenſe; that voluptuouſneſs was our ſovereign good: others placed it in exemption from pain: theſe imagined it centred in glory and reputation, while thoſe reſolved it into indolence and ſloth: a greater number, confounding the means with the end, pretended that virtue only is the happineſs of man; and wiſdom, in itſelf, her own reward. Theſe blind, proud men thought that man was fully ſufficient to his own happineſs; and that he is the ſole author of his own felicity. Their preſumption involved them in ſo abſurd an error, that, after having maintained, that their wiſe men would be happy, even though ſhut up in *Phalaris*'s *bull*; they were forced to grant, that it was ſometimes neceſſary to fly from, and avoid that happy life: and, to complete their extravagance, after having advanced, that the wiſe

wiſe man is happy amidſt all the torments and afflictions of this life; yet, when preſſed with the conſideration of all the miſeries, which might befal him, they willingly allowed, that under ſuch trying circumſtances, this ſame wiſe man might put himſelf to death, in order to procure his deliverance from this pretended happy life!

But how was it poſſible for him, who was always happy, and whoſe happineſs was always in his own power, to loſe it by any calamity whatſoever?

Such of the philoſophers, who were enlightened enough to perceive that man's true happineſs was not attainable in this life; far from referring him to that infinite ſource, who alone is able to ſatisfy all his deſires; far from conſoling him with the ſweet hope of one day poſſeſſing his deſired felicity; thought that it was not even poſſible to commence an happineſs upon earth, but in proportion, as that divine fountain of happineſs deigned to communicate himſelf to us, and permited us to enjoy him. All their ſplendid philoſophy terminated in pro-

miſing to mankind an abode in the elyſian fields, where their ſole occupation ſhould be to hold converſe with the ſhades of men deceaſed, mutually to relate their paſt adventures; poſſeſſing the ſame deſires as formerly, for thoſe objects which attach us to this earth, ſighing inceſſantly after the wretched condition of thoſe who had ſurvived, and impatiently expecting the moment which ſhould give them the ſatisfaction of reviewing the light of day.

Reſpecting moral truths.

§. VII. After having run into ſo many errors and impieties upon the fundamental points of religion, theſe philoſophers could not avoid miſtakes in their *moral precepts*. The ignorance of man's true end, and of the nature of his ſoul, neceſſarily carried with it the overthrow of every rule of manners. Thus, who of theſe philoſophers ever knew that grand precept of the love of GOD, and it's extenſiveneſs? With them pride and ſelf-love were the ſoul and main ſpring of all the actions of their life. Their philoſophy did but deſtroy ſome vices, by the ſubſtitution of others; it taught an oſtentatious

tious contempt of the world, in order to gain that world's applauſes: it rather fought after the fame and glory annexed to the poſſeſſion of wiſdom, than wiſdom itſelf: and in deſtroying one paſſion, always raiſed up another more dangerous upon it's ruins.

As one neceſſary conſequence of their morality, nothing was ſeen amongſt them but envy, jealouſy, an ambitious temperance in meats and drinks, an hypocritical ſeverity of aſpect, and a ſupercilious modeſty; in ſhort, only vain-glorious and apparent virtues: nay, nothing could be found amongſt them but diſorders and corruption. For cities, the moſt fertile of great philoſophers, *Rome*, *Athens*, *Corinth*, as we have before obſerved, conſecrated the moſt abominable vices, laſciviouſneſs, inceſt, cruelty and perfidy!

All thoſe ſage philoſophers countenanced the people in theſe irregularities, both by their example, and their doctrine. The graveſt amongſt them excuſes, "the drinking even to exceſs, ſo as it be but at the "feaſts

" feaſts of *Bacchus*, and in honour of that " GOD." Another of them, after having condemned every indecent repreſentation, excepts thoſe performed to ſuch GODS, as would be honoured with infamous rites of this nature. What ſhocking practices do moſt of the principles inculcated by theſe pretended wiſe men excite ? *Ariſtotle*, for inſtance, teaches, That nothing is abſolutely good or evil in itſelf : that the deformity of our actions ariſes from the circumſtances of times and places, not from the nature of things : inſomuch, that a change of times only is requiſite to render that good, which was formerly evil. Guided by ſuch a principle as this, to what lengths might mankind run ! what a depravation of manners did the indecent laws of Lycurgus, Solon, and Minos introduce ! what ſacrilege and confuſion would the eſtabliſhment of Plato's republic have produced ;— that philoſopher, ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed above the reſt ! It annihilates the holy inſtitution of marriage, by permitting a brutal confuſion of alliances amongſt mankind. It confounds thoſe paternal names and prerogatives which nature hath ever held in higheſt

higheſt eſteem, and gives men to the world, wholly uncertain of their deſcent, and conſequently without ſocial ties, without tenderneſs, without affection, and even without humanity *.

Such are the wanderings of human reaſon; ſuch it's ſtrange and deplorable fruits, even in thoſe who have paſſed for geniuſes ſo ſublime and profound! Theſe men ran, as at a venture, after truths, which were ſealed up from them. They were continually inventing new ſyſtems, which ſerved only to remove them ſtill farther and farther from thoſe grand objects of their purſuit. The diſciple out-did his maſter, and only heaped up new errors upon the former. And this is the utmoſt which reaſon could effect, ſo long as it was left to it's own direction: there is no error which it hath not conceived, and brought forth. Having no fixed and certain rule for it's conduct, it was evidently biaſſed by every gale

* See *Leland*'s advantage and neceſſity of chriſtian religion, 2 vols. 4to. for full proof of what has been advanced in the foregoing ſections. See alſo *Plutarch*'s lives of *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, &c.

of

of human opinions. To day it affirmed, and on the morrow conteſted what the foregoing day it had maintained. Reduced, at length, after much diſputation, to grant, that it knew nothing, and that all things were a chaos impenetrable to it's ſcrutiny.

Thus did the Deity laugh at human wiſdom. He was deſirous, by ſo long and fatal an experience, to convince vain and proud reaſon of the depth of it's ignorance, of it's inability to attain truth. And he *hath convinced* it, by leſſons thus deeply humiliating, of it's want of a ſuperior guide, and a ſupernatural intelligence; ſince, left to itſelf, it cannot avoid falling into an abyſs of errors.

Application to Rouſſeau.

§. VIII. And now we will beg leave to aſk *Rouſſeau* a few plain and ſimple queſtions.—Were not theſe great men, theſe exalted genius's of profane antiquity, endued with a reaſon as capacious as his own? Were they not furniſhed with as many natural aſſiſtances for the inveſtigation of truth as himſelf? How then, after ſo clear a proof as we have juſt been giving, can *Rouſſeau* have

have the hardineſs to tell his Emilius. " You " will find my expoſition treat of nothing " more than *natural religion:* it is very " ſtrange that we ſhould ſtand in need of " any other! By what means ſhall I find " out ſuch neceſſity?" What then! Is the *whole univerſe*, exhauſted with the vain efforts it hath made to diſſipate it's darkneſs, inſufficient to convince *Rouſſeau* of the neceſſity of revelation? After ſo palpable and convincing a proof, will he ſtill venture to aſk us, " What purity of morals, what " ſyſtem of faith, uſeful to man, and ho- " nourable to his maker, can I deduce from " any poſitive doctrine, which I may not " as well deduce without it, from a proper " uſe of my natural faculties?" Might not thoſe philoſophers, whoſe extravagancies we have been conſidering, addreſs us in ſuch language, with as much good reaſon and propriety as Rouſſeau?

And yet theſe men, more honeſt than Rouſſeau, were forced to grant that they could not attain the knowledge of truth by the aſſiſtance of their reaſon alone. *Porphyry*, convinced of the inutility of all human means,

means, owned he was in expectation of an effectual remedy for the delivery of the ſoul from it's doubts and obſcurity *: and even *Julian*, accuſtomed as he was to deny whatever was unſupported with the fulleſt evidence, confeſſed, that the nature of man is not of itſelf capable of knowing what is uſeful for it, and, conſequently, has need of a ſuperior intelligence to enlighten and inſtruct it †.

Shall not the ſad experience then, which the philoſophers, and, with them, all mankind have had, of the inſufficiency of their reaſon, and every natural faculty, be able to check and confound the proud preſumption of a Rouſſeau? — Does not the example of what has already paſſed, prove to him, in a very ſtriking manner, that human creatures, without the aſſiſtance of revelation, cannot, by the exertion of their reaſon alone, attain to purity of morals, or diſcover a ſyſtem of faith uſeful to man, and honurable to his Creator? The hiſtory of the aberrations of human reaſon ſhews us that every

* Apud Aug. L. 10. de civ. Dei, c. 32.
† Apud Cyril. L. 5. contra Julian.

principle

principle of the law of nature, being almoſt effaced from the hearts of men, it became neceſſary, *for the glory of* GOD, *for the good of ſociety*, and the *proper advantage* of man in particular, to hold forth to him anew, thoſe truths, which had vaniſhed from his underſtanding, and his heart.

Who can help being indignant, when he hears Rouſſeau oſtentatiouſly advance, " That the moſt ſublime ideas we can form " of the Deity, are inculcated by *reaſon* " alone ?—" What ideas of the Deity hath this *reaſon* inculcated ? What a Deity did it contrive before it was illuminated by the rays of revelation ? To this revelation, not to our erroneous reaſon, are we indebted for ſublime ideas of the Deity. This it is, which hath cauſed to diſappear by it's ſplendor, and hath diſſipated by it's power, ſo many opinions injurious to the divine nature. Without this aſſiſtance, we ſhould ſtill walk on, blind and groping, as in the thickeſt night, ſeeking continually in vain, what our reaſon could never diſcover to us. Of this truth, Rouſſeau furniſhes us with a glaring inſtance in himſelf. What are thoſe fine

fine ideas of the Deity, which his reaſon ſuggeſts to him? If he eſtabliſhes one, in an inſtant after, he either cavils at, or contradicts it: Again, he recurs to it, and ſoon afterwards reduces it to a problem, till, at length, he becomes forced to grant, that he underſtands nothing of the matter. Would you ſee an analyſis of Rouſſeau's curious ideas of the Deity? He even doubts, whether *or no matter be eternal*; whether *there be one ſole cauſe of all things*, or whether *there are many*. He knows not whether GOD *created matter, body, ſouls, and the world*. He is obliged to own, That *the ſingle idea of creation confounds him, and is beyond his reach* *. And ſhall this man, thus buried in the miſts of groſſeſt ignorance, ſtill dare to aſſert, that the ſublimeſt ideas of the Deity are inculcated upon us by *reaſon* alone?

But let us ſee what this reaſon can diſcover, even upon the confeſſion of Rouſſeau himſelf. — "To this term [GOD] ſays he, "I annex the ideas of intelligence, power "and will, which I have collected from the "order of things; and to theſe I add that

* See Emilius. Vol. III. p. 72.

"of

" of goodneſs, which is a neceſſary conſe-
" quence of their union : but I am not at
" all the wiſer concerning the eſſence of the
" Being to which I give theſe attributes :
" he remains at an equal diſtance from my
" ſenſes, and my underſtanding. The more
" I think of him, the more I am con-
" founded. — I no ſooner endeavour to con-
" template what he is in himſelf ; I no
" ſooner inquire where he is, and what is
" his ſubſtance, than he eludes the ſtrongeſt
" efforts of my imagination, and my be-
" wildered underſtanding is convinced of
" it's own weakneſs. *" Grant then, poor and feeble mortal, that you are unable to know any thing of GOD but what he kindly condeſcends to inform you. At length, acknowledge the neceſſity of a revelation, which every object, as well within as without you, proclaims ; and be ſenſible, that by refuſing to ſubmit yourſelf to that gentle and amiable yoke which revelation impoſes, you become the perpetual ſport, and wretched victim of a reaſon which blinds you ; to conceal from your ſight thoſe precipices from which it would plunge you.

* Vol. III. p. 48.

Having had ſo clear information, of the impotence and deluſion of your reaſon; having deplored it's follies and aberrations in ſuch pathetic terms; having ſketched out to us ſo natural, yet ſo loathſome a picture of them: By what fatality are you led back again to the old track?

" I reflected, you tell us, on the unhappy " lot of mortals, always floating on the oce- " an of human opinions, without compaſs " or rudder; left to the mercy of their tem- " peſtuous paſſions, with no other guide " than an unexperienced pilot, ignorant of " his courſe, as well as whence he came, and " whither he is going. I ſaid often to my- " ſelf, I love the truth; I ſeek, yet cannot " find it. Let any one ſhew it me, and I " will readily embrace it. Why doth it hide " it's charms from an heart formed to adore " them? *"

Such, then, is the ſad condition of men, according to Rouſſeau; of thoſe who have no other ſupport than their feeble reaſon. They float continually on this ocean of human opi-

* Vol. III. p. 20.

nions,

nions, without rudder or compaſs, with an unexperienced pilot, who is ignorant of his proper courſe; who directs us, without knowing whence he comes, or whither he is bound. What reliance then can be placed on ſuch a guide?

If Rouſſeau ſays true; if he loves truth; if he ſincerely ſeeks after it; let him forthwith confeſs the abſolute neceſſity of revelation, ſince all his efforts have been unavailing to procure him a knowledge of that truth; ſince all he *hath been able to deduce by his long and painful meditations, is but incertitude, obſcurity and contradiction, as well with regard to the cauſe of his exiſtence, as the rule of his condition.* But let us hear him further.

" In this ſituation, proceeds he *, I con-
" ſulted the *philoſophers*; I turned over their
" books, and examined their ſeveral opini-
" ons; in all which I found them vain,
" dictatorial and dogmatical, even in their
" pretended ſcepticiſm; ignorant of nothing,
" yet proving nothing; ridiculing one ano-

* Vol. III. p. 21. & ſeq.

" ther : and in this laſt particular only,
" wherein they were all agreed, they ſeemed
" to be in the right ; affecting to triumph
" whenever they attacked their opponents,
" they wanted every thing to make them
" capable of a vigorous defence. If you
" examine their reaſons, you will find them
" calculated only to refute ; if you number
" voices, every one is reduced to his own
" ſuffrage : they agree in nothing but diſ-
" puting : to attend to theſe, therefore,
" was not the way to remove my uncer-
" tainty. I conceived that the weakneſs
" of the human underſtanding was the firſt
" cauſe of the prodigious variety which I
" found in their ſentiments, and that pride
" was the ſecond..... We are ignorant
" even of ourſelves ; we neither know our
" own nature, nor principle of action ; nay,
" we hardly know whether man be a ſimple
" or compound being : impenetrable myſ-
" teries ſurround us on every ſide ; they
" extend beyond the region of ſenſe : we
" imagine ourſelves poſſeſſed of underſtand-
" ing to penetrate them, and we have only
" imagination. Every one ſtrikes out a way,
" which he thinks good ; but no one knows

" whether

" whether it will lead him to the point he
" aims at. We are yet deſirous to pene-
" trate, to know every thing; ..... we
" had much rather determine at random,
" and believe the thing which is not, than
" confeſs that none of us is capable of ſee-
" ing the thing that is ..... But were the
" philoſophers even in a ſituation to diſcover
" the truth, which of them would be inte-
" reſted in ſo doing? —— Each of them
" knows very well that his ſyſtem is no
" better founded than thoſe of others; he
" nevertheleſs defends it, becauſe it is his
" own. There is not one of them, who
" really knowing truth from falſhood,
" would not prefer the latter, of his own
" invention, to the former, diſcovered by
" any body elſe. Where is the philoſopher,
" who would not readily deceive mankind,
" to increaſe his own reputation? Where is
" he, who ſecretly propoſes any other object
" than that of diſtinguiſhing himſelf from
" the reſt of mankind? Provided he raiſes
" himſelf above the vulgar, and carries
" away the prize of fame from his com-
" petitors; what doth he require more?
" The moſt eſſential point is to think diffe-

" rently from the reſt of the world. Among " believers, he is an atheiſt, and among " atheiſts he affects to be a believer."

Nothing can be added to the picture here drawn by Rouſſeau of the philoſophers of our time: it flatters not, nor ought it to be ſuſpected, ſince the author is a perfect connoiſſeur in this kind of writing: obſerve we the conſequences he draws from it. " I " could ſee further, he concludes *, that, " inſtead of clearing up any unneceſſary " doubts, the philoſophers only contributed " to multiply thoſe which moſt tormented " me, and reſolved abſolutely none. I there- " fore applied to another guide, and ſaid to " myſelf, let me conſult my innate inſtruc- " tor, who will deceive me leſs than I may " be deceived by others; or, at leaſt, the " errors I fall into will be my own, and I " ſhall grow leſs depraved in the purſuit of " my own illuſions, than in giving myſelf " up to the deception of others."

How abſurd a concluſion! — Who would not have thought that Rouſſeau—after having ſo clearly perceived and demonſtrated the inſufficiency of the reaſon of our philoſophers,

* Vol. III. p. 24.

phers, for the diſcovery of truth — muſt have concluded other lights and aſſiſtances to be neceſſary, than thoſe with which it furniſhes our minds? Is not this the rational inference from all his confeſſions? If *the weakneſs of the human underſtanding is the firſt cauſe of that prodigious diverſity in the ſentiments of our philoſophers*; if we are ſo limited, that *we are ignorant of our very ſelves*; that *we neither know our own nature, nor the principle of our actions:* nay, that *we hardly know whether man be a ſimple or compound being:*—if in order to penetrate into the *impenetrable myſteries which ſurround us on every ſide, we imagine ourſelves poſſeſſed of underſtanding, while we have only imagination* to aſſiſt us: if, *no one can know whether the way he ſtrikes out will lead him to the point he aims at* — How can any one be ſo blind, as to reject the neceſſity of revelation! How can he heſitate to acknowledge the need of a ſupernatural intelligence to deliver us from all thoſe endleſs *doubts* which inceſſantly perplex and *torment* us; and to raiſe us from that ſtate of trouble and anxiety into which we are caſt by the uncertainty and contradiction of our minds, with reſpect to the moſt important points? In ſhort, ſince *the philoſophers could*

not, after all their efforts, ſettle our doubts, even were they in a condition capable of diſcovering truth, becauſe, *no one of them would be intereſted in ſo doing*; becauſe *there is not one of them, who, though really knowing truth from falſhood, would not prefer the chimæra of his own invention, to the truth diſcovered by another:* becauſe all, without exception, *have no other object in view*, than *to diſtinguiſh themſelves*, and *every one for the advancement of his own reputation, would readily deceive all mankind:* —What remains for us, then, but to deſire the kind aſſiſtance of a guide, incapable either of deceiving, or being deceived; who, becoming our ſurety and protector, may ſtrike out for us a certain path to our GOD, and ſhield us as effectually from ſelf-deluſions, as from the deceptions of others?

Further proof of the neceſſity of revelation.

§. IX. All that we have been hitherto obſerving, being confirmed by the teſtimonies given by Rouſſeau, ought abundantly to ſatisfy us, that man, in his preſent ſtate, is under an abſolute neceſſity of divine revelation, in order to a right knowledge of the Deity, of his own true condition and deſignation,

nation, of what he owes to his GOD, and of the acceptable manner wherein to ſerve and honour him.

But beſide that *internal worſhip* and homage which man owes to his Maker; he is further bound to pay an *external adoration*, whoſe firſt fruit is the ſoul; and which cannot be thoroughly underſtood but by the aſſiſtances of revelation.

The profound abaſement of our ſouls, under a juſt ſenſe of the infinite majeſty of heaven; ſentiments of tender and ardent love, of unſhaken confidence in his goodneſs, and of lively gratitude for his bleſſings, are, undoubtedly, the chief and principal parts of that worſhip which we owe to the ſupreme Being. Without theſe, all elſe is but hypocriſy and falſhood; we do but affront him with a lip homage; we vainly ſeek to impoſe on him by outward appearances, deſtitute of that devotion which they are but the *means* to expreſs; and we may reſt aſſured, that all ſuch ſervice is only an abomination in the ſight of the inviſible Being, who fathoms the very ground of our hearts. But,

at

at the ſame time, it would be as dangerous an illuſion to imagine, that *internal* worſhip is all which the Deity requires of us.

Man, being compounded of a body and a ſoul, he owes to his GOD the homage of them both; and juſtly doth the Deity demand man's reverence and obedience, as well by the actions of his body, as by the ſentiments of his ſoul. Whatever man is and hath, proceeding wholly from GOD, and belonging to him, — it is moſt reaſonable, that all ſhould concur to render the divine Donor that religious adoration which is his due. The body, then, muſt neceſſarily be united in worſhip with the ſoul; it ſhould conſtitute but one votary with the ſoul; it ſhould be the high-prieſt of her religion; the witneſs to depoſe her ſentiments; the ſoldier to fight boldly in their defence.

The condition to which mankind is reduced, and that dependance, which minds have on bodies, require they ſhould be advertiſed by a worſhip which ſtrikes the ſenſes, to enter into the ideas which they ought to have of the Deity. It is this external

external of religion which ſuſtains the ſoul, which ſtirs up and aſſiſts her to elevate herſelf to GOD. What a conſolation does it afford her, to be, by theſe external aids, enabled to expreſs the ſentiments wherewith ſhe is animated; to find in them a ſupplement to her piety, and means ſo natural to enflame and augment it! Take from her theſe ſenſible objects, and you will preſently perceive her religion to wax feeble, and decline into a languor, which will infallibly introduce an utter extinction of her firſt conceptions.

Man holds the middle ſtate between GOD and the reſt of the creatures: all of them are calculated for his ſervice; all are made for him. It is his part to offer up to GOD the praiſes of all created beings, of whom he is the centre and connecting bond. It is through him they are to return to their great firſt cauſe, as they all derive exiſtence from him. He is reſponſible, on behalf of all the other creatures, to diſcharge their obligations to their Creator. He is their ſoul and their intelligence. He is their voice and their ſubſtitute. Man, therefore, the eſtabliſhed high-

prieſt

prieſt of all creation, ſhould obſerve a public and ſolemn form of adoration, whereby to acknowledge the ſupreme dominion of GOD over all, to teſtify a reverence of him as the author and lord of all created beings, and to render him, in their names, the homage of their dependence and ſervitude.

Mankind, in ſhort, being ordained to live in ſociety, and to form a religious body, which may more cloſely unite them than all the ties of nature and of blood; it is neceſſary they ſhould have a viſible worſhip, whereby mutually to manifeſt their inward diſpoſitions, and the ſentiments of their hearts towards GOD: they ſhould edify their brethren, by the example of their piety, and lead them, by theſe ſtimulating expreſſions of public adoration, to render the Deity that worſhip, homage and reſpect, which ſo juſtly are his due.

Theſe ſentiments, and theſe principles are ſo natural, ſo deeply engraven on the heart of man, that we have ſeen in all ages, *a mode of worſhip*, *altars*, *ſacrifices* and *days*, ſet apart, and conſecrated to the honour and ſervice

ſervice of a true or a pretended GOD. Idolatry itſelf, which, in proceſs of time, almoſt overſpread the whole earth, hath borne full teſtimony to this eſſential point in religion.

Indeed the devils, who then paſſed themſelves upon the world for GOD, and affected all theſe externals, knew that they were the appendages of divinity, and the duties of the creature. When they demanded of their followers, temples, altars, proceſſions, ſacrifices, and whatever conſtitutes an external form of worſhip; it was becauſe they knew that all theſe were due to him, whoſe name they aſſumed, and whoſe glory they uſurped. People of all nations acquieſced in their demands, only becauſe they were fully perſuaded of the ſame truth. It is therefore evident, that no one can cavil at the neceſſity of an outward form of worſhip, without doing violence to his reaſon and underſtanding, and offering the groſſeſt affront to the declared and univerſal aſſent of all nations.

But the external worſhip, which GOD requires of us, muſt not be left to the choice and

and caprice of every private perſon. To be agreeable to GOD, it muſt be regulated by his injunctions, and conſonant to his will: It is his province to preſcribe it to us: he ought to be it's principle, as he is it's end: It is therefore for him to manifeſt to us, by revelation, that particular method of adoration, which he requires: for reaſon cannot ſuggeſt to us the free and poſitive will of the Deity in this matter: it is too remote from our ideas and apprehenſion. Nothing but the declaration which GOD himſelf ſhall be pleaſed to make, can communicate this knowledge, and aſſure us of our conformity with what he requires of us. And, conſequently,—whether we conſider revelation, with reference either to internal or external worſhip—both concur to demonſtrate it's abſolute neceſſity *.

§. X. We

* It may not be improper to obſerve what Rouſſeau offers by way of objection to the *proofs* here urged. "That "the worſhip of GOD, ſays he, ſhould be uniform, I "grant is neceſſary, and I would have it ſo: but is this a "point ſo very important, that the whole apparatus of "divine power was neceſſary to eſtabliſh it? Let us not "confound the ceremonials of religion with religion itſelf. "The worſhip which GOD demands, is that of the heart; "and this, when it is ſincere, is ever uniform: Men "muſt

§. X. We agree with Rouſſeau, that the Deity requires to be worſhiped in ſpirit and in truth. That the adoration he aſks of us, is that of the heart; but no one can thus

Internal worſhip eſſential to external.

" muſt entertain very ridiculous notions of the Deity in-
" deed, if they imagine he can intereſt himſelf in the
" gown or caſſock of a prieſt, in the form of words he
" utters, or in the geſtures and genuflexions he makes at
" the altar. Alas! my friend, where is the uſe of knee-
" ling? Stand as upright as you will, be ſatisfied you
" will be always near enough the earth. GOD requires
" to be worſhiped in ſpirit and in truth. This is a duty
" incumbent on men of all religions and countries. With
" regard to exterior forms; if, for the ſake of peace and
" good order, their uniformity be expedient, this is
" merely an affair of government, and ſurely requires not
" the aſſiſtance of revelation."

All this, plainly, is downright fineſſe: Rouſſeau endeavours to change the ſubject with his readers only, that at all events, he may more ſurely deceive them, and dazzle their imaginations with low and ridiculous buffoonery. " Men, ſays he, muſt have very fooliſh notions of GOD " to imagine he can intereſt himſelf in the particular habit " of a prieſt, in the order of words he pronounces, or " in his geſtures or genuflexions at the altar." But when or where did this unreaſonable and diſingenuous writer hear it ſaid, that revelation was *requiſite* to preſcribe the mode of a prieſt's habit, his geſtures and genuflexions? Can he be ignorant, that all theſe inferior circumſtances vary according to times and places? Does the foundation

thus worſhip GOD, but ſo far as he conforms to that external worſhip, which GOD impoſes upon all his true followers. To refuſe ſubmiſſion to this injunction is to be proud, to

tion and eſſence of external worſhip conſiſt in theſe particulars? Is not the performance always eſſentially the ſame, whatever may be the prieſt's habit, geſtures or genuflexions?—But he will be taken, as we humbly apprehend, in the ſnares he ſeems ſo deſirous to have laid for others; and ſoon find his own words a ſufficient confutation of what he advances. The *prieſt* he refers to, — not the peculiar faſhion of his gown: — The *altar* he mentions, and the *ſacrifices* there offered, — not the ſeveral geſtures and emotions there exerciſed, are what really conſtitute the eſſence of external worſhip. Theſe are the important points, which it required the full exertion of the divine power to eſtabliſh on a ſolid foundation. Indeed, ſacrifice being due to GOD, and to him only, it became him to point out ſuch a one as might be moſt agreeable to himſelf, and to preſcribe to mankind an order of prieſts and miniſters, to offer it up to him. Rouſſeau talks of not confounding the ceremonials of religion with the duty itſelf: —But how hath he profited by this leſſon? He is tardy in this very inſtance; ſince with a view to delude his readers, he has wilfully confounded ſome accidental ceremonies of external worſhip, with the eſſentials of that worſhip itſelf.

But he goes on: "Alas, my friend, ſtand as upright "as you will, reſt ſatisfied you will always be near "enough the earth." Could this feeble worm, this child of duſt, venture thus to expreſs himſelf, if he were duly ſenſible of his own unworthineſs and depravity, and of the infinite excellence of the ſupreme Being! Ought he not rather

to deſpiſe and contemn him, and it is impiety to reject that which conſtitutes a part of true piety. Now, all external worſhip has reference to a renovation of the heart, as it's principal end; it tends only to confirm the dominion of God within us, and to direct and invigorate us in the performance of internal worſhip. It is deſigned only to inſpire us with ſentiments of love and gratitude, to awaken our devotion, to purify our hearts, to detach them from earthly conſiderations, and to exalt and unite them to him, who is the alone worthy object of their contemplation. Such is the end of all external worſhip. And any one may from hence eaſily perceive how greatly he injures it, who regards it as foreign to the adoration in ſpirit and in truth; ſince it is the rule, the model, and the baſis of it.

rather to have addreſſed his pupil thus? "Shouldeſt "thou, my friend, abaſe thyſelf, and be confounded as "much as poſſible, before the ſovereign Majeſty of hea-"ven, thou couldeſt never ſufficiently teſtify thy abſolute "dependence upon him, thy extreme poverty, and his "infinite ſublimity and excellence. Before this God, "whom thou worſhipeſt, whatever is great in heaven "and earth, is eclipſed; under a juſt ſenſe of this awful "Majeſty, every being ſhould be abſorbed and annihi-"lated." Thus ought the man to expreſs himſelf, who ſincerely deſires to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth.

It would certainly, as we have before obſerved, be a very groſs error and ſuperſtition, to think of pleaſing GOD, and paying him the homage he reaſonably expects from us, by proceeding to theſe outward demonſtrations, and reſting there, without any concern to make the ſecret diſpoſitions and emotions of our hearts perfectly correſpond. It would be in vain to burn incenſe on the altars of the LORD; in vain would ſacrifices be multiplied: if the heart burned not at the ſame time with the fire of love toward GOD; if it were not entirely ſacrificed and devoted to his glory and ſervice. It would be affronting the ſupreme Majeſty in the moſt enormous degree, to think of giving him honour, without the joint oblation of love. But then too, it would be another miſtake, and fatal deception, to pleaſe ourſelves with the thought of worſhiping GOD in ſpirit and in truth, without a careful obſervance of that external worſhip, which is ſo neceſſary a concomitant of the former.

When

When the heart is well regulated, when it's love and affections are ſincerely dedicated to GOD, it will never think of diſputing with him the outward evidences and profeſſion of the juſt ſentiments it entertains. To a heart glowing with love, it would be too painful a denial to withhold the outward teſtimonies of it's ſubmiſſion and reſpect; the public and ſignal proofs of it's homage and adoration. A ſoul full of affection for it's GOD, cannot delay the ardent expreſſion of whatever may redound to his honour; nay, religion itſelf can hardly ſupply it with exerciſes and means ſufficient to ſatisfy the fervor which conſumes it.

It very well ſuits the propenſity of our infidels, to turn into ridicule the practices and duties of external worſhip, and to repreſent them as the province of weak underſtandings, and vulgar ſouls! Who are theſe men, then, who vaunt ſo much of their reaſon, their ſuperior abilities, and ſtrength of underſtanding? Let any one

follow and examine them, and he will find every inclination of their minds the moſt groveling and mean: he will find them to be ſordid ſouls, over whom every paſſion domineers; who are only influenced by the wanton caprices of humour, and the irregular ſuggeſtions of their imagination; and who are guided ſolely by the inſtinct of the ſenſes, like irrational animals. What is there to be ſeen in them, which is noble, elevated, worthy the ſtrength and excellency of reaſon? With them every qualification conſiſts in a vain oſtentation of fine words and ſpeeches. But their reaſon, their magnanimity, their pretended philoſophy would diſappear, and abandon them in thoſe emergencies, when it ſhould become neceſſary to give proof of their reality. They are therefore nothing more than ſo many children, than feeble reeds, which every wind agitates at pleaſure. Are the duties of religion brought in queſtion? They then affect a ſingularity, a ſtrength and ſuperiority of mind, which every thing within them belies. If they are ſtrong, it is againſt GOD; but they are even weakneſs

weakneſs itſelf, when the point in hand is to combat their own hearts.

What do men like theſe poſſeſs in common with thoſe heroes, whom religion hath made ſuch; with thoſe great ſouls ſo worthy our veneration for their eminent underſtanding and virtues, ſo inſenſible to every earthly enjoyment, ſo generous, ſo intrepid in every danger, ſo diſpoſed to ſacrifice every thing for their GOD? And yet, ſuch men as theſe mingled themſelves with the ignorant multitude, in the exerciſes of divine worſhip. The more excellent they were in every other circumſtance, ſo much the more lowly and ſimple did they become, when the ſervice of GOD required them to perform the duties of piety. Thoſe admirable men placed all their delight in pouring forth their ſouls in theſe outward expreſſions, and in jointly animating their hearts by theſe mutual teſtimonies of faith and devotion.

But we need not be ſurprized, if our modern infidels teſtify contempt only for outward worſhip, and ſeek to bring it to no-

thing. This is not what they immediately aim it; their ſhafts are levelled againſt that worſhip in ſpirit and in truth, which they ſeemingly ſet off and embelliſh, only for form's ſake, and the better to cover their deſigns. They dare not attack it openly; but they ſtrike at it through the ſides of *external* worſhip, which they know to be it's bulwark and firmeſt ſupport. They would fain aboliſh this *external* worſhip, which lays them under uneaſy reſtraint, and ſubjects them to paſs for impious perſons for not acting conformably to it's rules. Could they but ſucceed in their attempt, they would ſoon after, in the ſecret of their heart, ridicule that *internal* worſhip, of which they now boaſt; and would enjoy, undiſturbed, without fear, and without reproach, the wretched fruits of their deplorable infidelity.

Whatever has been hitherto advanced, confirms and demonſtrates the neceſſity of *external worſhip*; and this neceſſity, as we have ſeen, proves, in it's turn, that of a *Revelation*.

§. XI. Theſe

§. XI. Theſe are the proofs we have to offer in favour of revelation; and, ſurely, he muſt be blind, who can reſiſt their evidence! I might have diſpenſed with producing ſo many of them; ſince, after having eſtabliſhed the *exiſtence of original ſin* *, the natural conſequence reſulting from it, is certainly a neceſſity of revelation. Indeed, do not the prodigious changes, which that ſin wrought in our nature, the general confuſion introduced by it, and the deep afflictions which it hath occaſioned;—do not all theſe fatal and lamentable attendants on our *fall*, unite to convince us, that the firſt ſtate of things having been troubled and inverted, we enter into a ſtate wholly new; and are reduced to the neceſſity of applying different means to repair the ruins of our former wreck?

The diſcovery of remiſſion of ſins, a further proof of the neceſſity of *revelation.*

Now, amongſt theſe means, we muſt certainly reckon revelation; ſince that, and that alone, can diſpel the thick darkneſs wherein our minds are involved, and which, as we have obſerved, is one neceſ-

* See firſt Diſſertation.

ſary conſequence of the crime committed by our whole race, in the perſon of our firſt parent.

But further, man having rendered himſelf guilty, and become a traitor to his GOD, and ſo, worthy of every infliction of divine wrath; diveſted of all the gifts of his bounty; and of himſelf wholly unable to repair the outrage offered to the ſupreme Majeſty; what reſource, what hope yet remained for him? What poſſible method ſhall he take to bring himſelf into favour with the offended Deity? How ſhall he even dare attempt it? What means ſufficiently efficacious ſhall he employ to ſucceed in the grand deſign? What ſhall man offer to his GOD, in compenſation for his fault, and in diſcharge of his mighty debt? All within him is polluted; ſin hath wholly infected him: what ſhall he preſent to his Maker, which may prove agreeable to him, or worthy of his acceptance? In vain would he call the other creatures to his aid: He is too much above them; and they are all too far beneath GOD, to perform the high part of a Mediator. What then ſhall become of loſt, fallen man!

man! unleſs the Deity himſelf vouchſafe to ſpeak, and teach him the path he ſhould purſue? — He muſt either abandon himſelf to a fearful deſpair, helpleſs, hopeleſs; and plunge from gulph to gulph in endleſs diſtraction; or, through another as dangerous extreme, preſumptuouſly think himſelf able to effect a reconciliation with his GOD, by his own efforts and ſervices; and, adding pride to his unworthineſs, pretend to approach the throne of the Deity, without having previouſly appeaſed him. This vain confidence would but tend more and more to irritate the angry GOD, and to place new obſtacles in the way of his reconciliation. Man would exhauſt himſelf in a thouſand vain and fruitleſs attempts, without advancing one ſtep nearer to the deſired end: his labour always fruitleſs, would avail him nothing, and leave him continually to languiſh under the load of his miſery, without finding any iſſue or concluſion.

It was neceſſary, therefore, that the divine goodneſs ſhould come in to the ſuccour of man, and, preventing his deſpair, point out to him the path for the recovery of his happineſs.

happineſs. It was neceſſary he ſhould be apprized of the methods appointed by divine wiſdom, for the reſtoration of it's degraded image, for the reparation of that rebellious outrage, which man, who bore it, had committed againſt his Maker.

A detail of the revelation of the great promiſe of a Redeemer

§. XII. And ſuch is the conduct which the infinite mercy of our GOD hath approved of in our behalf. Scarcely had man fallen, and declined from his firſt ſtate, before GOD announces him a *deliverer*, who ſhould releaſe him from that ſlavery to which his infidelity had reduced him: who ſhould confirm anew that ſacred communion between GOD and man, which had been interrupted by his fall, and reinſtate him in all thoſe glorious privileges, of which he had been deſpoiled.

This great promiſe could be the only ground of hope to Adam and his poſterity. It was given in this manner to the father of the human race, that it might be tranſmitted by an uninterrupted tradition, down to his remoteſt deſcendants. It was carefully preſerved by ſuch tradition for a time; but very

very ſoon the turbulent paſſions of mankind immerſed it in almoſt total oblivion:— It was in a manner buried amidſt thoſe crimes and diſorders wherewith the earth was overſpread. Ever attentive to his promiſe, God renewed it a ſecond time to Noah, the father of the new world; and yet, notwithſtanding this, the diviſion of languages, and the idolatry which followed cloſe upon it, effaced the remembrance of this gracious diſpenſation from the minds of almoſt all nations. It was upon the point of being wholly loſt, even in the midſt of *Shem*'s family, choſen for the purpoſe of preſerving the ſacred depoſit; when the Deity, always jealous for the veracity of his engagements, employed freſh means to perpetuate the memory, and aſſure the accompliſhment of them.

For God then elected Abraham and his family to become the repoſitory of the ancient tradition, and to preſerve, through their miniſtration, the ancient faith, the true mode of worſhip, and the primitive religion. This is that Abraham ſo celebrated amongſt the orientals. The *Hebrews* are not the only people

people, who regard him as their father *: the *Idumæans* glory in the ſame origin. The Arabs alſo acknowledge their deſcent from him, by his ſon Iſhmael. They all ſtrictly obſerve the rite of *circumciſion*, as a proof of this original. They have always impoſed it,—not as the Jews, on the *eighth day*, but at the age of *three years*; the time when the ſcriptures inform us, it was adminiſtered to Iſhmael their anceſtor. We find the ſame cuſtom obtain amongſt the Mohammedans. It would be uſeleſs to relate here all that the ancients have told us concerning Abraham. The Chaldeans and the Syrians have written many things of this great man,

All theſe proofs ſuffice to ſhew that the perſon here mentioned, is not a fabulous one, nor his ſtory a fiction or impoſture. What we ſhall take occaſion to obſerve in the ſequel on eſtabliſhing the truth of the ſcriptures, will ſtill farther demonſtrate the veracity of thoſe out-lines which characterize Abraham.

* See the very excellent *Bibliotheque Orientale* of *Herbelot* on the word *Abraham*. We have the pleaſure to aſſure the public, that a tranſlation of this moſt *valuable* and admired work is preparing for the preſs, by an able hand.

With

With this celebrated man, GOD was pleaſed to renew his promiſe of a Redeemer: he engaged, to this holy patriarch, to bleſs, in his race, all thoſe blind and ignorant nations, who, at that period, had forgotten their Creator. By virtue of this precious ſtem, they ſhall one day be enlightened and recalled to the knowledge of Him, who is the only ſource of every bleſſing.

Till that time, GOD had communicated no part of his will by writing, which might ſerve as a rule for mankind. Circumciſion, and the ceremonies which accompanied it, were inſtead of articles of that alliance which GOD made with Abraham and his poſterity; it ſerved to diſtinguiſh them from the idolatrous nations, by conſecrating them to the worſhip of the GOD of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob: and was an ever viſible and ſubſiſting monument of the promiſes made to their forefathers.

At length the æra marked out in the decrees of divine providence arrived. GOD would no longer leave the myſteries of his religion and

and his covenant to the treacherous memory of mankind. It was time to oppoſe the ſtrongeſt barriers to that idolatry, which, making new progreſs every day, would ſoon have ſtifled the feeble remains of natural reaſon. From the time of the patriarch Abraham, ignorance and barbariſm took prodigious ſtrides, and every nation was already become corrupt.

Moſes. §. XIII. To this great work, *Moſes* was the perſon called and appointed of GOD; by whoſe order, and under whoſe inſpiration, he compoſed the hiſtory of religion, in every paſt age, from Adam, to the time in which he wrote. In theſe divine books are to be found the plan and deſign of religion, for all times.

Moſes had no need for deep reſearches to collect the traditions of his anceſtors. He was born but one hundred years after the death of Jacob. The old men of his time had ſeveral years together converſed with that holy patriarch. The memory of Joſeph, and of the miracles which GOD wrought by the means of this great miniſter for the Ægyp-

tian

tian kings, were all ſtill recent. The life of a ſmall number of men, at that period, reached back to the very beginning of things. *Lamech*, who had ſeen *Adam*, had alſo ſeen *Shem*; *Shem* had at leaſt *ſeen Abraham*, and *Abraham* had ſeen *Jacob*, who alſo had ſeen thoſe who lived in the time of *Moſes*.

This longævity of the firſt men, related in the annals of GOD's people, was not unknown to other nations; their ancient traditions have alſo preſerved the memory of it. In the antiquities of Joſephus, all poſſible proofs are found. This too was an excellent method, concerted by divine providence, for the preſervation of truth amongſt men. Why are not *we*, in theſe latter ages of the world, as familiarly verſed in the events which occurred amongſt our anceſtors? Becauſe it rarely happens, that we have lived with them; or becauſe they are often dead before we have attained the age of diſcretion. Now, on the contrary, the firſt men lived for ſeveral centuries; their children converſed with them for a long ſeries of time: by this means they eaſily learned the hiſtory of thoſe who had gone before them, and could afterwards

wards tranſmit that hiſtory by the ſame channel to their deſcendants. Thus, when Moſes wrote his books, the remembrance of thoſe incidents which he relates, muſt have been ſtill freſh amongſt the Jews: and therefore too that ſacred legiſlator ſpeaks of them, as of certain facts, which were ſtill to be collected from authentic records among the neighbouring people, and more particularly in the land of Canaan. Moſes then muſt be eſteemed as an hiſtorian contemporary with his ſubject; and his hiſtory, as the moſt authentic in the world.

And, indeed, can any one fail to obſerve in that hiſtory all thoſe marks of ſincerity and truth which characterize this great man? —Would an impoſtor, deſirous of deceiving a whole nation, have diſplayed ſuch a conduct? Would *he* have related palpable events, of which the whole world could have been informed? — A man, ſo ſkilful as Moſes, would certainly have taken meaſures to prevent his being detected of impoſture; he would have thought to ſkreen himſelf among a multitude of generations; a method, which would eaſily have concealed the

the knowledge of the truth. But, by the method he has taken, it was impoſſible, had he deſigned never ſo much to deceive, that his deceit ſhould have paſſed undetected. "You tell us, (the Jews would have naturally ſaid to him) of things, which we "know nothing of, nor have ever heard "mentioned: and yet, if all theſe facts are "true, we ought to have been acquainted "with them, by means of that ſmall num-"ber of generations, which you reckon up "ſince their accompliſhment: we muſt have "almoſt touched upon thoſe great events; "they muſt have been publicly notorious "amongſt us. Certainly, then, you are an "impoſtor, who only ſeek to delude us un-"der theſe pretences."

Whatever Moſes has advanced, agrees alſo admirably with what the moſt ancient and learned hiſtorians of other nations have related to us. We may read in *Joſephus* that multitude of teſtimonies given by Ægyptian, Chaldee, Phœnician and Greek authors, whom he quotes againſt Apion, to prove the antiquity of his nation, and to confute the ridiculous fables, and groſs calumnies, which

that writer had vented againſt the Jews; and, if we conſult the traditions of thoſe different nations, we ſhall find, in ſpite of all the fictions which they have mixed with them, the foundation of thoſe great truths contained in the writings of Moſes.

Indeed, all nations, who have left us any records, have had an idea of the creation of the world * : formleſs at firſt, and afterwards moulded into that ſtate wherein we behold it. They have all of them made mention of a firſt age, in which mankind, as the reward of their innocence †, lived in a profound peace, and enjoyed a perfect happineſs. They have alſo ſpoken of another age, wherein ſin had precipitated mankind from the ſummit of their felicity, into an abyſs of miſery. The univerſal deluge, and the ark, which ſaved a few men from the waters, were not unknown among other nations ‡. Their tradition informs us, that the world was re-peopled by a ſingle man, preſerved amidſt the wreck of mankind.

* † ‡ See the collection of teſtimonies in *Grotius* on the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and other authors. — For the deluge ſee the teſtimonies from Catcot, in the *Chriſtian's Magazine*, Vol. V.

They

They knew his three ſons, and the diviſion they made among them of the empire of the univerſe. Nothing is more frequently repeated in ancient records, than the audacious attempt of thoſe bold men, who undertook to raiſe an edifice of a prodigious height, thence forwards to ſkreen themſelves from the vengeance of heaven. They moreover repreſent to us the pride of thoſe men confounded, and themſelves forced to abandon their concerted enterprize.

Theſe ſeveral points have always been univerſally received amongſt men, by means of a conſtant and uniform tradition: It is true, men have, in a courſe of time, mixed with thoſe truths many fables, which have disfigured them: but through all theſe clouds and veils, the truth ſufficiently penetrates itſelf to be perceived. Thus the univerſal conſent of all thoſe nations, to whom, nevertheleſs, the ſcriptures were unknown, clearly demonſtrates the veracity of thoſe very ſcriptures, in their moſt ancient and aſtoniſhing relations. For, is it not evident, that the univerſal traditions ſubſiſting among all nations, independant of the diſtance of

times and places, and the diverſity of languages and manners, could have had no other foundation than that of *facts* clearly aſcertained, and generally received * ?

Difficulties in revelation no objection to the belief of it.

§. XIV. A multitude of other proofs of every kind might be here added, to demonſtrate the truth and divinity of the ſacred volumes. But the ſubject propoſed for immediate conſideration, will not admit of ſo long a digreſſion: we will therefore confine ourſelves ſingly to what Rouſſeau's objections to thoſe proofs, already offered, ſeem to require. In order to which, let us obſerve how he expreſſes himſelf on the head of revelation.

* "What ſtrength of evidence, ſays a judicious author, "in favour of the truth of theſe books! The conduct of "the Hebrew people, the only nation exempt from ido- "latry; the unanimity of the Samaritans and Jews, who, "notwithſtanding their avowed antipathy, have both of "them preſerved the pentateuch in the ſame form. The "ancient hiſtories, which make mention of Moſes, or con- "firm many of the facts which he relates: the marks "of ſincerity, evident in the work; the records, the "feaſts, the ceremonies, which have conſecrated to poſ- "terity certain events which happened in the time of "Moſes: the no leſs true, than aſtoniſhing miracles of "that legiſlator; — all this can leave no doubt with "the lovers of truth."

"With

" With regard to *revelation*, could I reaſon " better, or were I better informed, I might " be made ſenſible perhaps of it's truth, and of " it's utility to thoſe who are ſo happy as to " believe it : but, if there are ſome proofs " in it's favour, which I cannot invalidate ; " there appear alſo to me many objections " againſt it, which I cannot reſolve. — " There are ſo many reaſons both for and " againſt it's authority, that, not knowing " what to conclude, I neither admit nor re- " ject it : I reject only the *obligation of ſub-* " *mitting* to it ; becauſe this pretended ob- " ligation is incompatible with the juſtice " of GOD : and that, ſo far from it's re- " moving the obſtacles to ſalvation, it has " multiplied them, and raiſed thoſe which " are inſurmountable by the greateſt part of " mankind : Except in this article, there- " fore, *I remain reſpectfully in doubt con-* " *cerning revelation* * ."

Here *Rouſſeau* owns, that he ſees proofs in favour of revelation, which *he cannot invalidate*. How mighty and deciſive then muſt thoſe proofs be, to defend themſelves

* Vol. III. p. 136.

againſt the ſhafts of an infidel, armed to combat whatever is moſt certain amongſt mankind, and ever prepared to conteſt even ſuch facts, as are confirmed by univerſal approbation !

But what is it which prevents him from conſenting to, and admitting, revelation ? Why, he ſees *many objections againſt it*, he tells, which he cannot reſolve : we grant it ; but is this a ſufficient reaſon for his refuſing his ſubmiſſion ? What would be our caſe, if we were to admit thoſe points only, whoſe difficulties every one could reſolve ? Guided by ſuch a principle, what would appear certain in the world ? Thoſe matters, concerning which we are under the leaſt doubt, are attended with inſuperable difficulties. The whole univerſe, whoſe exiſtence, none but men abſolutely irrational could contradict, preſents us in every different point of view, with a knot of indiſſoluble difficulties : and where is the man, whoſe underſtanding can unravel them ? In the *natural*, as well as in the *moral* order of things, man finds himſelf at a loſs, and is obliged to acknowledge the narrow limits of his underſtanding. We

ſee

ſee too, that in every ſcience, as ſoon as the truths treated of are once demonſtrated by ſufficient proofs, their ſeveral ſtudents no longer perplex themſelves with objections to them, how ſtrong ſoever they may be; nor are ever the leſs attached to the truth demonſtrated, though they cannot ſatisfy every cavil againſt it. Indeed were it otherwiſe, they would be able to retain nothing, but would be daily obliged to renounce truths the beſt eſtabliſhed.

In order to deſtroy truths ſolidly demonſtrated, it is not enough to form againſt them objections which cannot eaſily be reſolved; but to combat directly thoſe proofs, which warrant them; without which, the force and ſolidity of the proofs themſelves are ſufficient to expoſe the futility and weakneſs of every objection.

Will Rouſſeau, when the Chriſtian Religion is in queſtion, be always ſo unjuſt as to abandon and controvert principles which himſelf at firſt adopted and followed? Does he not, *in his confeſſion of faith* * admit ſeveral

* Vol. III. p. 100, &c.

points, liable to difficulties, which he could not venture to boaſt himſelf able to reſolve? To how many objections is that *ſpirituality of the ſoul* expoſed, which he maintains againſt the materialiſts? —And is the underſtanding of *Rouſſeau* alone capable of reſolving them all? — But, in order to form a truer judgment of his partiality, let us hear him explain himſelf; "Revolving in my mind, ſays "he *, the various opinions which had ſucceſſively prevailed with me from my infancy; —and proceeding to compare them "impartially, and without prejudice with "each other, I found that the firſt and "moſt common, was alſo the moſt ſimple, "and the moſt rational; and that it wanted "nothing more to ſecure univerſal ſuffrage, "than the circumſtance of having been "the laſt propoſed. Let us ſuppoſe, that "all our philoſophers, ancient and modern, "had firſt exhauſted all their whimſical "ſyſtems of power, chance, fate, neceſſity, "atoms, an animated world, ſenſitive "matter, and materialiſm of every other "kind; and, after all them, let us imagine "the illuſtrious *Doctor Clarke* enlightening "the world, by diſplaying the Being of

* Vol. III. p. 25.

"Beings

" Beings, the ſupreme and ſovereign Diſ-
" poſer of all things. With what univerſal
" admiration, with what unanimous ap-
" plauſe, would not the world receive this
" new ſyſtem, ſo grand, ſo conſolatory, ſo
" ſublime, ſo proper to elevate the ſoul,
" to lay the foundations of virtue ; and, at
" the ſame time, ſo ſtriking, ſo perſpicu-
" ous, ſo ſimple ; and, as it appears to me,
" pregnant with leſs incomprehenſibilities
" and abſurdity, than any other ſyſtem
" whatever! I REFLECTED, THAT UN-
" ANSWERABLE OBJECTIONS MIGHT
" BE MADE TO ALL, BECAUSE THE
" HUMAN UNDERSTANDING IS INCA-
" PABLE OF RESOLVING THEM ; AND
" THEREFORE NO PROOF COULD BE PRE-
" FERABLY BROUGHT IN SUPPORT OF
" ANY : BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE IS
" THERE IN DIRECT PROOFS!"

After having eſtabliſhed ſo juſt and evi-
dent a principle, how can he ſtill have the
temerity to alledge againſt revelation the vain
pretence of objections which cannot be re-
ſolved ? — " They are common to every
" ſyſtem, ſays he, very juſtly, becauſe, the
" human

" human underſtanding is too limited to re-
" ſolve them, &c." To be obliged to ſubmit to revelation therefore, it is enough that we ſee in it's favour *proofs which cannot be invalidated*; and Rouſſeau grants that his own are of that nature.

The picture which Rouſſeau proceeds to delineate, is exactly that of the chriſtian religion. Let any one imagine to himſelf all thoſe philoſophers, ancient and modern, with all their whimſical ſyſtems; and, after them, — not the celebrated *Doctor Clarke*; — but that *chriſtian religion*, from whence he drew his fine ſentiments, and whoſe defence he hath undertaken in his excellent writings. — Let any one contemplate this *religion* in the glorious act of enlightening the world, by diſplaying the BEING of BEINGS, the ſovereign diſpoſer of all things; ſhewing to mankind their true condition; the great and noble end to which they are reſerved, and the ſure and effectual means for their attainment of that end. — With what univerſal admiration, with what unanimous applauſe muſt not ſo grand a ſyſtem be received, ſo conſolatory,

ſo

ſo ſublime, ſo proper to elevate the ſoul, to fix virtue on a ſolid baſis; and at the ſame time ſo ſtriking, ſo perſpicuous, ſo ſimple, and offering conſiderations leſs incomprehenſible to the human mind, than are found in any other ſyſtem whatever! If it were poſſible for any one to form objections againſt this ſyſtem, would that be matter of aſtoniſhment? They are common to every ſyſtem: but then what difference is there between the proofs in favour of ſome, and thoſe brought in ſupport of others!

The proofs of the chriſtian religion are carried to the utmoſt degree of evidence. They conſiſt of a variety of other facts, all marked with a ſtamp of an indiſputable nature. A long ſeries of years, and the perpetual tradition of irreproachable witneſſes; witneſſes, in every reſpect worthy of an entire credit, join to demonſtrate the truth and authenticity of all theſe facts. Where elſe ſhall we find an evidence ſo inconteſtible as this?

Let

Let thoſe then, who pretend to cavil at the chriſtian religion appear. Let them produce their ſeveral titles; and we ſhall ſee that, by the moſt amazing contraſt ever beheld, they will only tend to burniſh the luſtre and glory of it's proofs. While other ſyſtems have only to amuſe us with and inculcate principles which diſhonour and degrade humanity; the *chriſtian religion* preſents us with the *pureſt doctrine*, and the *ſublimeſt morality*; moſt analogous to our neceſſities, moſt conſolatory to our ſouls!

How can Rouſſeau have the confidence to tell us, that "there are ſo many *ſolid* reaſons both for and againſt the authority of revelation, that, not knowing what to conclude, he can neither admit nor reject it?" how ſtrange is this kind of reaſoning!—Is there any thing *ſolid*, but what is *juſt* and *true?* and can truth ever be oppoſed to truth? So that, to ſay "there are *ſolid* reaſons *for* and *againſt* revelation" is to advance that truth is both for and againſt herſelf, that ſhe is divided againſt herſelf, and that ſhe ſupplies her adverſaries with weapons to fight againſt her own cauſe!

Since

Since then Rouſſeau, is forced to grant, that revelation is ſupported by ſolid reaſons, and with ſuch proofs as cannot be invalidated; let him candidly acknowledge, as the neceſſary conſequence of his confeſſions, *that he can ſuggeſt no reaſons, truly ſolid, againſt revelation:* He may have found out ſome which are ſeemingly ſuch. But from the moment we are aſſured that revelation hath ſolid reaſons in it's favour, we ought no longer to entertain a doubt; but reſt aſſured that every reaſon, which can be urged againſt it's authority, can have no other than a ſolidity, ſpecious, apparent, and relative to the diſpoſitions which affect us.

Rouſſeau's diſtinction of the *obligation* to ſubmit to revelation examined

§. XV. But let us not paſs by that diſtinction, which Rouſſeau makes in the paſſage now under conſideration. "I reject, ſays "he *, *only the obligation of ſubmitting to* "*revelation*; becauſe this pretended obliga- "tion is incompatible with the juſtice of "God; and becauſe, ſo far from removing "the obſtacles to ſalvation, it has multiplied "them, and raiſed thoſe which are inſur- "mountable by the greateſt part of man- "kind."—What! if revelation is confirmed

* See p. 101.

by

by proofs which *cannot be invalidated*, if it's divinity is clearly demonſtrated, doth it not lay an obligation upon mankind to acknowledge and ſubmit to it's authority? Was ever ſo ſtrange a paradox advanced? — Shall the Deity ſpeak to mankind, and make known to them his will: Shall he intimate his commands to them, and employ the whole ſplendor of his majeſty, to convince them that it is he who ſpeaks: and ſhall not men be *obliged* to acknowledge him, to obey him, and ſubmit themſelves to his voice? How ſhould we, in ſociety, treat a man who ſhould dare to aſſert that a ſubject is not bound to pay deference to the laws of the ſtate, and the orders of his ſovereign, when they are once well eſtabliſhed? But what a wide difference is there between a man thus ſpeaking, and a GOD, whoſe beheſts are always juſt and holy; and who cannot admit of the leaſt delay in ſubmiſſion to them!

Rouſſeau does not inform us upon what foundation he apprehends himſelf able to convince us that "The *obligation* in queſ-" tion is incompatible with the juſtice of " GOD."

" GOD." Does he think then, that he has only to judge, pronounce and conclude upon it, and then to be believed upon his bare word *He*, who conteſts even the Deity's right, to be believed upon his own Word : — But how can the obligation to acknowledge revelation be incompatible with the divine juſtice ! It is that very juſtice which impoſes this duty on man ; and becauſe GOD is juſt, and a lover of order, he cannot diſpenſe with this obligation upon his creature. If GOD ſpeaks to mankind, if he manifeſts himſelf to them by revelation, it is for their advantage. This gift and benefit demand a tribute of love and gratitude : how ſhall that tribute be offered to him, unleſs we are obliged to receive what he condeſcends to teach us ? This ſubmiſſion is the firſt ſtep, and the beſt teſtimony of gratitude to a GOD who ſpeaks to us. We have ſhewn Rouſſeau the neceſſity of revelation : there is therefore an obligation upon man to acknowledge it ; ſince, as we have proved, it is in this way only he can learn the truths eſſential to his ſalvation.

Is

Is not Rouſſeau to be pitied, when he comes very ſeriouſly to aſſure us, "That by "revelation, and the obligation to ſubmit "to it's authority, the Deity, very far from "removing the obſtacles to ſalvation, hath "multiplied and rendered them inſur-"mountable to the greateſt part of man-"kind?" What extravagance; what a rêverie is this? Doth revelation multiply the obſtacles to ſalvation! So far from it, that it is revelation, as we have before ſhewn, which is come to make plain the paths which lead mankind to it. While wandering here and there, unable to diſcover any iſſue of their travel, revelation, as it were, took mankind by the hand to extricate them from thoſe labyrinths of error in which they had been loſt, and introduced them to thoſe pleaſant paths of truth and righteouſneſs, from which they had ſo widely deviated. Nor doth it ceaſe to enlighten and direct them, till it hath brought them ſafely into port. Before it beamed forth, obſtacles aroſe, multiplied, and truly inſurmountable even by the nobleſt minds. What then muſt they be for the reſt of mankind? But ſince it

hath

hath been manifeſted amongſt men, the moſt ſimple and ignorant are become verſed in the ſublimeſt truths, without difficulty or labour, or the exerciſe of deep ſtudy. Every man has only to follow the road pointed out for him, in order to the ſure attainment of ſalvation.

It is certain, that if it were neceſſary to uſe every method which Rouſſeau requires and preſcribes *, to be aſſured of the truth of revelation; the obligation to receive it would then, far from removing the obſtacles, multiply them on the contrary, and render them inſurmountable to the greateſt part of mankind. But we will ſoon prove to Rouſſeau, that he aims merely to frighten his readers, by heaping up difficulties, which, however invincible they may appear, vaniſh without heſitation, ſo ſoon as they are examined by the ray of right and ſound reaſon.

We will make it evidently appear, that the proofs in favour of revelation are ſo ſimple, clear and obvious, as to be within the

* See Vol. III. p. 10, &c.

reach of the meaneſt capacities: we will make him ſenſible, that it rather requires candor and ſincerity than labour and application, to diſcover the truth of them.

Rouſſeau's ſelf-contradiction &c.

§. XVI. But in the mean time let us take notice of the declaration which Rouſſeau makes in the paſſage juſt quoted. He proteſts to remain, as to the matter of revelation, in a reſpectful doubt: Now we ſhall ſoon ſee how he has verified the principle which he had juſt before advanced.

" I cannot comprehend, ſays he, how " any man can ſincerely be a SCEPTIC " on principle. Such philoſophers, either " do not exiſt, or ſurely they are the " moſt miſerable of men. To be in doubt " about things which it is important for us " to know, is a ſituation too perplexing for " the human mind, it cannot long ſupport " ſuch incertitude; but will, in ſpite of " itſelf, determine one way or other, and " rather deceive itſelf than believe nothing."

So then this pretended *reſpectful doubt* of Rouſſeau's is but a meer veil, which he ſpreads

ſpreads the better to conceal the impieties he is pleaſed to vent againſt revelation! He would not ſeem to doubt; but, in order to be more ſure in his attack, he feigns a reſpect, only the better to diſguiſe his ſacrilegious attempts. That this is really the caſe, our readers will preſently be convinced.

Rouſſeau very honeſtly acknowledges, that "he ſees proofs in favour of revela-" tion, which he *is unable to invalidate.*" And yet there is no means, no attempt, which he does not make uſe of to deſtroy them fundamentally. As he is not ignorant that *miracles* and *prophecies* are the principal vouchers in ſupport of revelation, he therefore employs every artifice in his power to weaken their authority; he ſets at work all his accuſtomed ſophiſtry to enervate their force, and diminiſh their impreſſion. He was ſenſible it was a difficult taſk to deny the exiſtence of all theſe ſanctions: but that he may not however fail of ſucceſs, he reſolves to eſteem nothing ſacred; he overleaps every barrier of moral juſtice, and even pays not the leaſt regard to the principles of moral certainty.

Should any one attempt to demonſtrate to him the truth of revelation, by the Miracles wrought to confirm it? He would ſtop them ſhort, with "Miracles! Prodi-" gies! I have never ſeen any thing of the " kind! Who were the witneſſes of theſe " miracles?"—If it be anſwered, "Men, " who atteſt them." His reply is ready. " What! always human teſtimony! It is " always men who are to tell me, what " other men have told them!"

Rouſſeau ſays, "Truly, he never ſaw " miracles!" Why! does he not every day ſee them in the effects they have produced? How would the world have believed things ſo apparently incredible, had it not ſeen miracles? What is it which could have worked ſo great a change in the world; — aboliſhed idols, deſtroyed idolatry — led ſo many nations, and great men, to embrace the Chriſtian religion, and engaged ſo many martyrs to give up their lives in it's cauſe? What, but the power and luſtre of it's miracles? Whole nations would never have believed, in ſo ſhort a time, what a ſmall handful of men,

men, without art, without ſcience, and of no reputation, came to propoſe to them, and that amidſt ſo many contradictions, if the invincible authority of ſigns and wonders had not, as it were, wreſted their aſſent, by overcoming all objections. Every thing proclaims the whole Chriſtian religion to be a *miracle* (as we have before ſhewn) and yet the infidel ſtill comes to tell us, "I "have ſeen no miracles." Let him then take off the bandage, which his paſſions, his prejudices, and his ſelf-conceit have tied over his eyes; and he will be amazed at not having ſooner perceived the luſtre which every where ſurrounded him.

§. XVII. But as it is in ſome degree neceſſary to follow the infidel into all his entrenchments, let us grant him never to have ſeen any of thoſe miracles, thoſe prodigies, thoſe ſupernatural events, which give ſanction to the Chriſtian religion. Is it neceſſary therefore to believe only what we have ſeen with our own eyes? and muſt they, according to this extravagant ſyſtem, whom nature hath deprived of ſight, believe nothing of what paſſes about them? Our Of human faith.

mind, in it's very nature, is inviſible ; it's ſentiments and diſpoſitions do not come under the cognizance of our ſenſes ; and yet how firmly does every rational man believe the reality and exiſtence of all theſe things ? How can we believe nothing but what our own eyes inform us, when we never doubt whether we believe or not thoſe things which our eyes are unable to perceive ?

If Rouſſeau's principles are true, there muſt no longer be any ſuch thing as *friendſhip* in the world. For who hath ocularly ſeen the affection and benevolence of his friend ? — How ſhall a man apply himſelf to make a ſincere return to that benevolence, when, his eyes not perceiving it, he never can be perſuaded of it's exiſtence. Will any one ſtart up and tell us, that the affection of a friend is ſeen and known by the actions it produceth ? True, but theſe ſigns of friendſhip are often very equivocal, and are not friendſhip itſelf. In ſhort, take away this faith from human affairs, and who diſcerns not what trouble and terrible confuſion muſt neceſſarily reſult from ſo doing ? What will remain unſhaken and ſacred in civil

civil ſociety, if we are to believe nothing, of which we have not had ocular demonſtration? Who would pay any regard to mutual charity, ſince no one can love any object, but ſo far as he *believes* that object amiable? Thus will divine friendſhip be loſt amongſt mankind; and, from that fatal period, all the ſweet and ſacred ties of marriage and conſanguinity, become utterly diſunited and deſtroyed! The bridegroom, or his bride, can no longer mutually love each other; nor entertain the deſire to have children, becauſe they can never believe that they will one day render them thoſe juſt returns of filial endearment which will become their due; and how ſhall thoſe children (ſhould they have any) when arrived at the age of diſcretion, — how ſhall they poſſeſs any love for parents, whoſe tender affection for them they will never be able to diſcern? How, indeed, ſhould they poſſibly perſuade themſelves, that theſe are their parents, — thoſe to whom they owe their being. They were not eye-witneſſes of their own birth; nor were they able, by any exertion of their ſenſes, to know the moment they began to be. They

can know it only on the report of others. And yet, on the bare authority of thoſe who aſſiſted at their nativity, men do, rationally, and without heſitation, believe thoſe to be their fathers and mothers, who are pointed out to them as ſuch. Were we to act otherwiſe, into what a fearful confuſion would it plunge the world! Piety, that precious tie of the human race, would be openly violated, would degenerate into an avowed contempt, and a ſacrilegious impiety.

Behold! whither the falſe ſyſtem of infidelity would conduct mankind!

Guided by principles like theſe, what Juſtice could be diſtributed amongſt men? How could crimes and diſorders be checked? To what a confuſion of incertainty would judges, and magiſtrates be expoſed? In order to form a judgment, it is neceſſary to believe; and to believe, according to Rouſſeau, it is neceſſary to have ſeen the ſubject of belief; and yet judges have hardly ever been witneſſes of the matters upon which they pronounce their determinations.

From

From whence ariſe the diſtinctions of families? and on what foundation are their names, their antiquity, and their nobility eſtabliſhed? Is it not upon a ſeries of facts, which none of us, at this period, ever ſaw with his own eyes, but which were entruſted to authentic records, which have been tranſmitted down to us from hand to hand? Now, ſhould any one venture to cavil at all thoſe facts, and records, becauſe he was not an eye witneſs of their authenticity, how would he be treated,—and what regard would be paid to his frivolous objections? Would he not juſtly be deemed a ſtupid perſon, deſirous of throwing every thing into trouble and confuſion?

The caſe is the ſame with reſpect to the poſſeſſion of lands, richés and revenues: this is founded upon titles, perhaps, whereof no body exiſting has ſeen the beginning and eſtabliſhment. Upon theſe titles, however, men judge and determine the rights of individuals. Now, would it not be an excellent reaſon, and tend greatly to clear them up, or to defeat them, to pretend only, that

that no body had ſeen the deeds and credentials of thoſe titles paſs? We muſt confeſs this would be a very notable method of liquidating the obligations which our anceſtors might have contracted.

Should this ſyſtem be adopted, will kings themſelves be ſafe upon their thrones? Their reign is eſtabliſhed and confirmed by an uninterrupted ſeries of human evidence: we know nothing of the erection of monarchy in a kingdom, but by facts of which hiſtory informs us. Now all thoſe perſons who lived but a century after it's erection, ſaw nothing of what paſſed at that period; and we who are living at this day know nothing of the form of government, but by the ancient records, and the tradition of our forefathers, from age to age brought down to us. If then, conſiſtently with Rouſſeau's principles, we cannot rationally believe any thing but what we have previouſly ſeen, we are wrong to acknowledge thoſe as ſovereigns, whoſe original is too ancient for us to have been eye-witneſſes of it: and therefore from henceforth men ought not to regard as their kings, their maſters and leaders, any other than ſuch

ſuch perſons on whom they have ſeen thoſe qualities, rights and prerogatives deſcend.

All thoſe men, who undertake long and toilſome voyages, to places which they never ſaw, are in Rouſſeau's judgment fools, and raſh, becauſe they believe, without heſitation, upon the teſtimony of others, the exiſtence of that which they have never beheld.

In ſhort, and to ſum up all, let Rouſſeau inform us on what grounds it is believed in the world, that there has ever been a Roman republic, a city of Carthage, a Scipio, a Hannibal, a Cæſar, a Pompey, and a variety of other facts, which no one of our time could have ſeen? What is it which could perſuade mankind, for ſo many centuries, that there was formerly an Hippocrates, a Plato, an Ariſtotle, a Cicero; and that theſe celebrated men are authors of the books which bear their names? Is it not becauſe the hiſtorians of thoſe times have ſpoken of theſe great perſonages, have mentioned their writings; and that this opinion, which hath been uniform from their time

to

to the preſent, is more and more confirmed by the common opinion of all men who have ſucceeded them, and the conſent of all ages? All mankind unanimouſly agree in theſe principles: a doubt upon theſe points would paſs for a certain proof of folly.—The man who ſhould conteſt ſuch indiſputable facts, would be univerſally laughed at; and, as the ſole reply to his impertinence, people would teſtify the moſt ſovereign contempt of his underſtanding *.

All the arguments we have been hitherto offering, invincibly demonſtrate that no abſurdity can be greater than to aſſert with Rouſſeau, that it is neceſſary to believe nothing but what we have ſeen. If faith be neceſſary in the tranſaction of human affairs, how much more ſo muſt it be in matters of a religious concern? If we are obliged to admit human teſtimony in whatever belongs to civil life; what right have we to reject the many multiplied and well-confirmed evidences which depoſe in favour the Chriſtian religion?

* Unde, ſi quis hoc neget, nec ſaltem refellitur, ſed ridetur. AUGUSTIN.

§. XVIII.

§. XVIII. It is the ſame ſociety, on the faith of which we continually act with the firmeſt confidence, that depoſes in it's favour. It is that which atteſts and warrants to us the truth of thoſe facts upon which our religion is founded, and the authenticity of the records which contain them. But what gives theſe facts the higheſt degree of evidence imaginable, and ſkreens them from the blaſts even of the moſt malignant cenſure, is, that they have never been controverted; that they have always been acknowledged, even by thoſe who were moſt intereſted to diſpute their veracity.

Of the allowed notoriety of the facts

Celſus, Porphyry, Julian, all who have attacked the Chriſtian religion, all who have ſeparated from it, or formed ſects by themſelves, have never, any of them, dared to entertain a doubt of the exiſtence of all theſe facts.

Thus, ſo far from the remoteneſs of theſe facts diminiſhing their notoriety in any reſpect whatever; on the contrary, it gives them greater weight. The general and

and unanimous consent of so many successive generations, who were unable to withstand their force, forms the completest demonstration in their favour.

When I behold all these facts, still recent, and published every where from the east to the west by a number of eye witnesses, who carry with them every character of truth and sincerity: when I see them maintain these facts, in the very face of the *Jewish* synagogue, a consistory of men, so perfectly instructed in every respect, and so interested to detect the imposture, if there had been any such :—when I behold the same men attest these facts before all the tribunals of the Pagan world, with a courage and fortitude which nothing can disconcert. Facts, whose certainty neither Jew nor Gentile can undertake to discredit ; but which, all of them, on the contrary, confirm and render indubitable, by attributing them to magic. — What light shines forth! what a degree of evidence and conviction! But, on urging my examination still further, what subject for my admiration ! what a superabundance of proofs ! All these facts were

received

received and revered in every part of the then known world, even before the end of that century which ſaw them make their appearance. By force of their evidence, they obliged even thoſe who were the moſt ſtrenuous oppoſers to admit them, and became victorious over every paſſion, prejudice and oppoſition. It is the faith of all theſe facts, which unites in one and the ſame religion, an immenſe people, every where diſperſed, and daily increaſing. For the ſpace of three hundred years, paſſed under the cruelleſt perſecutions, this people, uninfluenced by any other intereſts than thoſe of truth, bore conſtant and innumerable teſtimonies to all theſe facts, in the midſt of the moſt horrible torments, and the moſt frightful deaths. At length, they became victorious over all their enemies, and their religion every where raiſed itſelf on the ruins of Paganiſm. This people always, and without interruption ſubſiſting from the inſtant of their firſt eſtabliſhment, gave the moſt conſtant and univerſal teſtimony to the truth of all theſe facts: and now, can there be any thing in nature more authentic, certain and irrefragable? — Is not a teſtimony

mony like this, ſo continued and perpetually ſupported from the time of Jeſus Chriſt down to the preſent age; is it not, I ſay, brought down to us by it's continuity, from the moment in which theſe extraordinary events happened? And does it not place them in ſome degree before our eyes, as though they had actually occurred amongſt us*?

* Had not Rouſſeau good reaſon to tell us, that nothing comes better atteſted than all the abovementioned facts? "Shall we ſuppoſe the evangelic hiſtory, ſays he to Emi- "lius, to be a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears "not the marks of fiction: on the contrary, the hiſtory "of Socrates, which nobody preſumes to doubt, is not "ſo well atteſted, as that of JESUS CHRIST." But ſince the hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt is ſtill better atteſted, than that of Socrates; and ſince nobody preſumes to doubt the latter, does not the fulleſt evidence conclude, that nobody ſhould doubt that of Jeſus Chriſt too? Rouſſeau can offer no other reply to this reaſoning, than by ſaying, that though nobody doubts the hiſtory of Socrates, and that of other men like him: yet this is no proof of the truth of their exiſtence, and can hinder no one from looking upon them as ſo many fables. But we have already obſerved upon the extravagance of ſuch a reply; and, ſurely, he who can deny facts thus certain, is only worthy the deriſion of every perſon of the leaſt underſtanding.

Let Rouſſeau then, at laſt, check his inflexible obſtinacy, his ſtrange inſatiable luſt of extending his name, by multiplying his errors. Let him leave us peaceably to follow the deciſive authority of that cloud of evidence, which

which he himſelf is forced to acknowledge : and as for himſelf, let him ſhrink back to the gloomy darkneſs, wherein he ſeems to delight himſelf ; and from henceforward ceaſe to ſpread out ſnares, in order to deprive us of a truth, whoſe name ſerves him as a veil to cover his pernicious deſigns.

But let us hear him again, as he delivers himſelf in his dialogue between a perſon pretendedly inſpired, and a pretended rationaliſt. The dogmatiſt objecting, in favour of his perſuaſion, the changes wrought in the order of nature, by miracles and prodigies of every kind ; Rouſſeau, who poorly counterfeits the character of a rationaliſt, anſwers him, as we before obſerved, " with prodigies and " miracles ! I have never ſeen any of theſe things." " No " matter, anſwers the dogmatiſt, others have ſeen them " for you ; we can bring clouds of witneſſes ; the teſti- " mony of whole nations." " The teſtimony of whole " nations ! replies the rationaliſt gravely, is that a proof " of the ſupernatural kind ?"—Who cannot diſcern the whole artifice of our ſophiſt ?—Who ever ſaid that the teſtimony of nations was a proof of a ſupernatural kind ? Miracles and prodigies are indeed proofs of a ſupernatural kind ; but the teſtimony of nations is no more than a further warrant of the exiſtence of thoſe proofs ; and, though of an order very natural, does not permit a doubt of the facts which it atteſts, as we have ſhewn before in the body of our work. Thus, in civil government, the laws of the prince are not of the ſame kind, with the teſtimony of thoſe who pronounce them to be the will of the ſovereign : But this teſtimony, and the conſent of the people in conſequence of it, are a certain proof of the exiſtence of the laws. It is not to this teſtimony, properly ſpeaking, that men pay their ſubmiſſion ; but it is in conſequence of this teſtimony that they acquieſce in, and obey the laws.

But Rouſſeau (our pretended *rationaliſt*) next proceeds to tell us of the abſurdity of crediting human teſtimony, He expreſſes himſelf to that purpoſe, as follows: "You "ſee, therefore, to what your pretended ſupernatural "proofs, your miracles, reduce us: — to the folly of be- "lieving them all on the credit of others, and of ſub- "mitting the authority of GOD, ſpeaking to our reaſon, "to that of man."—What!—is the authority of GOD ſubmitted to that of men, becauſe miracles are believed on the report of men? Reaſon ever ſubmits herſelf to the authority of GOD; human teſtimony is only, as it were, the medium of her ſubmiſſion; and, if reaſon yields her aſſent to this teſtimony, it is becauſe the authority of GOD, ſpeaking to reaſon, informs her that ſhe cannot reject the former, without invalidating the latter. To make this matter ſtill more intelligible, I aſk Rouſſeau, whether he would ſay that the man, who, with his own eyes ſees miracles performed, and yields to their proof on this evidence, ſubmits the authority of the Deity, ſpeaking to his reaſon, to the authority of his own eyes? It is the ſame with whatever we believe on the faith of others. The examination of others puts us in the ſame condition as that obſervation which our own eyes would have made; and we only grant that to their authority, which we could not have refuſed to our own.

Rouſſeau, always intent to deceive, pretends that no regard ought to be had to the authority of human teſtimony in favour of Revelation; becauſe it attempts to eſtabliſh abſurdities.

"We have ſet aſide all human authority, ſays he to his "pupil,—and without it I cannot ſee how one man can "convince another, by preaching to him an unreaſonable "doctrine. Let us, for a moment, ſuppoſe two men en- "gaged in a diſpute on ſuch an occaſion:"

The

The manner in which he makes his dogmatiſt ſpeak, is as follows:

" Your reaſon tells you that the whole is greater than " a part; but I tell you, from GOD, that a part is greater " than the whole." Can one figure to one's ſelf a ſtronger indication of malevolence, and a deſire to deceive?—And could Rouſſeau have taken a ſurer method to perſuade his impartial reader, that his attack is merely ſupported by calumny, falſhood, and injurious imputations? Whom will he induce to believe that Revelation propoſes to us abſurdities, ſo puerile and groſs, as that he inſtances? Surely our infidels muſt be wretchedly deſtitute of ſolid argument, to be obliged to fly for aſſiſtance to ſuch inſidious ſlander! one may eaſily perceive this writer's aim is only to catch thoſe ſuperficial minds, who, being previouſly ſeduced by their natural corruption, ſeek only for vain pretences to ſtifle the feeble flaſhings of a conſcience juſt expiring.

We defy Rouſſeau to point out the leaſt abſurdity in our ſacred books; and on our part we engage to prove that what he urges as ſuch, ſtrikes at no eternal truths, which our minds cannot apprehend: on the contrary it tends only to explain, to elucidate, and to vindicate them from thoſe outrages, which the ſpirit of infidelity inceſſantly offers againſt them.

DISSERTATION III.

ON MIRACLES.

Introduction.

§. I. WE now proceed to defeat all thoſe falſe principles, advanced by Rouſſeau againſt the authority of *miracles*. This writer would, as it were, annihilate, if poſſible, the Chriſtian Religion: and the more effectually to ſucceed in the deſign, he aſſaults it in it's very foundations. But we perſuade ourſelves, every effort of this champion of infidelity, againſt that immovable rock, will be defeated, like thoſe of the many others who have attacked it.

Obſerve how he expreſſes himſelf in a diſcourſe at the beginning of his third volume, which he has the confidence to put into the mouth of a miniſter of JESUS CHRIST.

After many arguments, as impious as abſurd, concerning the evidences in favour of Revelation, he goes on, "ſuppoſing all theſe "monuments acknowledged to be incon-"teſtible, we muſt then proceed to examine "the

" the proofs of the miſſion of their au-
" thors: it would be neceſſary for us to
" find out of what kind a miracle ſhould
" be, and the authenticity it ought to bear,
" not only to claim our belief, but alſo to
" render it criminal to doubt it: to com-
" pare the proofs of true and falſe miracles,
" and diſcover the certain means of diſtin-
" guiſhing them: and, after all, to tell why
" the Deity ſhould chuſe, in order to con-
" firm the truth of his word, to make
" uſe of means, which, themſelves, re-
" quire ſo much confirmation; as if he
" took delight in playing upon the cre-
" dulity of mankind, and had purpoſely
" avoided the direct means to perſuade their
" belief *."

Muſt not he have arrived at the higheſt degree of infidelity and impiety, who can vent ſuch blaſphemies? who can accuſe the Deity himſelf of having choſen out improper means for perſuading mankind: of having acted in ſuch a manner, as if he wantonly ſported with their credulity, and had purpoſely ſhunned the moſt obvious means for their conviction? Who can enough admire

* Vol. 3. p. 110.

the temerity of this writer, who can fancy himſelf to be a better judge of theſe matters than all mankind in all preceding ages!

The means uſed to propagate Chriſtianity proper.

§. II. What were thoſe *means* which actually have perſuaded people of all nations, and of every language and tribe, of the truth of our religion?—Were not they the direct means of perſuaſion? Thoſe means, which, by detaching men ſo ſuddenly from that falſe worſhip, which a pretended natural religion ſuggeſted, made the dominion of ſatan vaniſh like a flaſh of lightning; were not they the proper means of perſuaſion? Thoſe means, which convinced of folly the philoſophers, who, like Rouſſeau, were bewildered in the vanity of their imaginations. Thoſe means, which broke the chains of every paſſion, which induced men to renounce all things, and even themſelves, in order to pay ſubmiſſion to the goſpel, with the brighteſt examples of virtue:—were not ſuch the direct means to perſuade?—What were thoſe means, which ſubjugated reaſon and will, the moſt obſtinate and perverſe, to the obedience of faith? which ſo forcibly influenced and ſo cloſely convinced

convinced men of every ſtate and condition, great and ſmall, learned and ignorant, that they all rather choſe to ſacrifice their fortunes, their repoſe, their liberty; to expoſe themſelves to every diſgrace, and ſuffer the moſt cruel and ignominious inflictions, nay, even death itſelf,—than to renounce the Chriſtian Religion—? were not means thus victorious, powerful, and efficacious, the true and only means of perſuaſion? But Rouſſeau, a more competent judge than the Deity himſelf, of the proper means for this purpoſe, ſeems to be of a different opinion; and therefore, doubtleſs, can be kind enough to inform us, what means he ought to have employed. What pity is it, ſo capable a counſellor was not called in to the counſels of the Almighty, in order to chalk out to him the plan of his conduct!

The propagation of Chriſtianity, the greateſt miracle.

§. III. But to proceed; let us again attend to this irreverent writer, while we ſhudder with deteſtation at his impiety. "Suppoſe, ſays he, that the divine ma- "jeſty, had really condeſcended to make "man the organ for promulgating his ſa- "cred will; is it reaſonable, is it juſt to

" require all mankind to obey the voice " of this miniſter, without his making " himſelf known to be ſuch? where is " the equity or propriety of furniſhing " him, for univerſal credentials, with " only a few particular tokens, diſplayed " before a handful of obſcure perſons, and " of which all the reſt of mankind can " never know any thing but by hearſay *?"

If it was neither juſt nor reaſonable for GOD to require all mankind to obey the voice of thoſe whom he had elected to be the promulgators of his ſacred will, is there any ſincerity in our author's pretence, that GOD, hath furniſhed them for univerſal credentials, with only a few private tokens, diſplayed before a few obſcure perſons, and of which all the reſt of the world can never know any thing but by hearſay?—Hath not the Deity, then, manifeſted and declared the miſſion of thoſe he hath choſen by inconteſtable records? And why did the whole univerſe believe the word of his miniſters, if they were not lawfully authorized?—Was it not a thing ſtill more wonderful than all the miracles put together, that ſo great a number of men, of tempers ſo dif-

* Vol. 3. p. 110.

ferent,

ferent, of characters ſo oppoſite, and ſo remote from each other, ſhould have given credit to our religion, without it was corroborated by inconteſtable miracles? Muſt it not have been very probable and credible of itſelf, when men ſo readily yielded their faith to it? How could faith in the name and doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, have diffuſed itſelf in ſo amazing a manner, if the ſanction of miracles had not prepared the way for it's reception? How, eſpecially, in thoſe times when reaſon exerted all her higheſt powers, and when men were uſed to deſpiſe and reject whatever ſurpaſſed the extent of their underſtanding? Guided by ſuch diſpoſitions, what could have determined the whole world to believe things ſo extraordinary, ſo incredible in appearance, ſo elevated beyond human idea, if the power of miracles had not inclined the underſtanding to the yoke of faith, and ſilenced every human argument? We need only urge this ſingle conſideration to confound the obſtinacy and blindneſs of our infidel. Either thoſe aſtoniſhing and incredible works to which the univerſe hath borne teſtimony, impelled them to give credit to a religion, which,

which, otherwiſe, would have appeared incredible; Or, that religion was ſo credible in itſelf, and ſo reaſonable, that it needed no aſſiſtance from miracles to convince mankind of it's veracity.

The infidel will never be able to reply ſubſtantially, to a concluſion thus deciſive. It will ever be ſufficient to ſilence thoſe vain and arrogant men, who ſtill demand prodigies from us, to induce their belief. He who can refuſe his ſubmiſſion, after a whole univerſe hath embraced the faith propoſed, is himſelf a greater prodigy, than All the miracles put together.

The firſt preachers of chriſtianity, a proof of it's divinity.

§. IV. That we may leave the unbeliever no room for cavil, and force him into his laſt entrenchment; we will proceed to grant him that the Chriſtian Religion bears ſome characters, which require very convincing miracles to perſuade men to believe it. But, at the ſame time, we will maintain and prove to him, that this religion, hath every thing of the kind, which can reaſonably be expected.

How,

How, indeed, could men, rude and unpoliſhed; without learning, without talents, without fame, without eloquence;—ſimple fiſhermen, and perſecuted by every ruling power, and ſtate:—How could ſuch as theſe have perſuaded the wiſe men of their time, and even philoſophers, of the divinity of their miſſion, and of a religion, in which there was every thing to loſe for a while, and nothing to gain; and which ſo narrowly circumſcribed the paſſions and appetites;—without they had adminiſtered clear and palpable proofs; and without they had been ſupported by the authority of certain and deciſive miracles?—

That men, in high power and reputation, whoſe doctrine flattered and ſoothed every paſſion and luſtful propenſity, ſhould have gained credit; would have been no matter of aſtoniſhment, nor could we have been much ſurprized at it: but that ſo ſmall a number of poor, ſimple, ignorant men, ſhould have ſubjected the whole univerſe to a religion like ours,—can we comprehend or explain ſuch an unheard-of phœnomenon, without

without admitting the interpoſition of a divine aid! without granting that GOD himſelf, by means of theſe feeble witneſſes, whom he had choſen, wrought this conviction in the hearts of mankind? a conviction ſo much the more admirable, by how much the more deſpicable and inadequate appeared the means by which it was effected.

It was not their diſcourſes, properly ſpeaking, which determined their auditors: the innumerable wonders, which GOD wrought by their hands, were an eloquence far more effectual to perſuade men to believe what they declared, than the moſt elegant and beſt contrived ſpeeches. Behold! all of a ſudden theſe men, well known before to underſtand but one or two languages only, are heard to ſpeak in every kind of tongue: in the name of JESUS CHRIST they command the lame to walk, and the dead to ariſe. Their very ſhadow alone is found to cure all kinds of diſeaſes upon the ſpot, in the ſeveral places through which they paſs. From the linen cloaths, which have only touched their bodies, proceeds a virtue, which diſſipates

diſſipates the maladies of thoſe to whom they are applied: at their Voice devils are expelled from thoſe whom they poſſeſſed; and—what is ſtill more ſtriking than all,—thoſe perſons, who embrace their doctrine, and on whom their hands are laid, receive a communication of the like gifts, with the power of performing ſimilar miracles. In ſhort, how many other prodigies did they not perform, in the face of the whole world; that world, which hath inceſſantly borne, and ſtill, by means of a conſtant and perpetual tradition, continues to bear a public and authentic teſtimony to their truth and reality.

And now we muſt here beg leave to aſk, whether this wonderful inveſtiture and exertion of gifts, and powers; is a *giving for univerſal credentials* (to thoſe whom God hath choſen to be the *organs for promulgating his ſacred will*) *only ſome few private tokens, diſplayed before a handful of obſcure perſons, and of which all the reſt of mankind can never know any thing but by hearſay?* —

Does

Does Rouſſeau, then, like that Julian, whoſe ſentiments and language he ſo perfectly imitates—reckon the whole world as an handful of obſcure people? The univerſe ſeems little in his eyes; and he fancies himſelf eaſily able to compute thoſe who occupy the whole earth. — Where ſhall we find that great number of witneſſes he requires, if all are but a few * ?—

Miracles, &c. as well atteſted as we could deſire.

§. V. Was there ever, in the nature of facts, any thing ſo certain, ſo known, and ſo well verified, as the miracles which concur to eſtabliſh the truth of our religion?— Rouſſeau would needs have been an eye witneſs of all theſe prodigies and miracles, in order to believe them. He would rather have heard the Deity himſelf; becauſe he fancies he ſhould by that means have been ſecure from being deceived. If we tell him in anſwer to this, that GOD enſures him againſt ſeduction, by manifeſting the miſſion

* *Cæterum quod dicit paucos fuiſſe — parvum facit orbem et facile numerabiles eſſe putavit eos qui univerſum orbem. Et ubinam multos inveniemus, ſi omnes ſunt pauci?*— Cyril. adv. Julian. Lib. vi.

of

of his envoys by miracles; "And where, "cries he, are theſe miracles to be ſeen?" In books. — "Are they related only in "books? pray, who wrote theſe books?" — Men — "Who were witneſſes to theſe "miracles?" — Men—who atteſt them. — "What! always human teſtimonies!—Is it "always men, who tell me what other "men have told them?— What a number "of theſe are conſtantly between me and "the Deity *!"

And yet Rouſſeau, ſo haughty as he is with his reaſon, gives us a ſtrong proof of his inconſtancy and levity! This man, who would ſeem ſo ſteady in his principles, being made the ſport of that reaſon, knows not what he would have. He demands miracles, in order to ground his faith; and yet, if the Deity, for the more glorious diſplay of his omnipotence, communicates to men the power of working theſe miracles,— He deſpiſes, and rejects this kind of teſtimony, merely becauſe Men are made the inſtruments of conveying it: O human reaſon, how blind and unreaſonable art thou, when left to thyſelf!—Rouſſeau is afraid of

* Vol 3. p. 108.

being

being deceived by that cloud of witneſſes which confirms the truth of our religion; by thoſe evidently divine proofs which characteriſe it: and yet he is not afraid of deceiving himſelf! And why! oh depraved reaſon! do you counterfeit the fear of being deceived by theſe well authorized teſtimonies of the Deity; yet are under no apprehenſion of deceiving yourſelf in this important matter? What if GOD ſhould manifeſt himſelf to *You*, as he manifeſted himſelf to his miniſters? would not you then have ſtill greater reaſon to be afraid of your own fallacious imagination, than in caſe the whole univerſe atteſted to you what you was not able to ſee for yourſelf? Is not this conjunction, unanimity and agreement of evidence, as rational and demonſtrative a circumſtance to fix your belief, as if GOD had ſpoken in particular to yourſelf?—No more, then, object to us—"What! always human teſtimonies?" Doth not GOD himſelf ſpeak to you by the intervention of theſe men, whom he hath choſen for that purpoſe? Has he not made himſelf a guarantee, a pledge, by the miracles which he hath enabled them to perform, "that they have only related to

"you,

" you, what he would have declared him-
" ſelf to you." — Beſides, could the weak and feeble eyes of man have been able to ſupport the formidable ſplendor of the ſupreme majeſty, if he had vouchſafed to ſpeak to him in perſon? Surely not.—And therefore to accommodate himſelf to our condition, and in great condeſcenſion to it's frailties; Divinity itſelf aſſumed the cloathing of humanity, in order to converſe with mankind; and elected men for the accompliſhment of the work which it had ſo begun. Where would be the *merit* of faith and obedience, if GOD had ſenſibly manifeſted himſelf to mankind? His duty and his perfection conſiſt in walking here below, amidſt obſcurity but with certainty: in ſeeing objects only as inveloped in clouds: and it is by this method that he muſt arrive at the ſeeing them clearly and unveiled.

Who is Rouſſeau; — what are all the infidels together, that they ſhould preſcribe to the Deity the method, by which he ought to ſpeak with them? Will they be ſo daring, as to pretend he ought to have done ſomething more than he has done? Muſt he be-

come visible to all men, and, like the sun, present himself daily before their eyes? Nay, even though he should do so, the impenetrable fund of incredulity, demonstrates to our experience that they would still have their doubts, and incessantly deny or contest the fact, under some pretence or other. For, if they have not proofs as sensible and demonstrative; they have at least those which are as strong, and as certain, which yet they oppose through the grossest abuse and perversion of their reason.

Reason, *opinion*, and *experience* concur to teach us, as we have before shewn, that MAN IS SINFUL. The *Christian Religion*, alone does and could discover to us his real state: and alone is able to account for all those strange inconsistencies in his constitution. This reveals to us, that man, by reason of his sin, is degraded from that state of excellence wherein he was created, and reduced to the wretched condition of a slave vanquished by his enemy. The infidel dashes himself against a mystery so elevated: and yet, as the great *Paschal* observes, exclusive of this mystery, which is the most incomprehensible

incomprehenſible of all; we ourſelves are incomprehenſible by ourſelves. The knot of our condition is ſo intricately ravelled and perplexed in this dark abyſs, that *man* himſelf is more inconceivable without the addition of this myſtery, th an this myſtery is to man.

Being thus become culpable, what remained in man's poſſeſſion, after the commiſſion of his offence, which could incline GOD to manifeſt himſelf to him? Was it not a very happy circumſtance for him, that GOD would ſtill deign to diſcover himſelf in any manner whatever? Is it not an undeſerved favour, that the Deity ſhould in any way he pleaſed to employ him, previouſly, and with a view to his introduction into that ſanctuary, which was rendered inacceſſible to man, from the inſtant of his fall? — Oh ingrateful and unnatural! who inſtead of being penetrated with a lively ſenſe of gratitude, towards that gracious Being, who ſtretches forth the hand of mercy, to raiſe them from their fallen condition: on the contrary, heſitate not inceſſantly to blaſpheme all the ſignal teſtimonies of his

kindneſs towards them. Kindneſs, whoſe high bleſſings they will not receive, or admit as offered to them; unleſs the Deity ſhall manifeſt himſelf to recommend them, by proofs as palpable as they may wantonly require. This wretched ſituation of mind, horrible as it appears, is the juſt puniſhment of their demerits: It is without any foundation, and therefore argues them guilty of the higheſt act of injuſtice, that they will raſhly draw conſequences from it againſt the Chriſtian Religion. That religion, which openly acknowledges, that ſince the fall of mankind, GOD hath not manifeſted himſelf to them, with all the evidence he is able to diſplay:—and which alſo inculcates on mankind, theſe two following truths, namely, That there is a GOD, of whoſe mercy they are enabled to avail themſelves; and a corruption in their nature, which renders them unworthy of it.

Theſe principles being eſtabliſhed, the neceſſary reſult is, that the Deity being from henceforth, a GOD concealed from man, an *Inviſible Eſſence*; man has only to ſubmit, to adore and thank him, in whatever manner

ner he may be pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf; provided the *tokens* of his preſence be certain. Now, the proofs in ſupport of the Chriſtian Religion, *are* certain — are inconteſtible: for, as we have before taken occaſion to obſerve, nothing is more abſurd than the contempt expreſſed by Rouſſeau for the authority of human teſtimony. Were that authority to be ſuperſeded, into what an horrible ſtate of pyrrhoniſm would the human race be plunged! — Moſt of the actions of mankind, are founded upon human teſtimonies; and by the light of this authority, men act with as much certainty, as if they had ſeen the things which they have reported to us.

Have not we therefore demonſtrations, in the nature of facts as certain and infallible, as thoſe of geometry or the mathematics?— It would be equally fooliſh to doubt of either; ſince, upon proofs of the firſt kind, things which are acknowledged in the world, as the moſt certain, are eſtabliſhed.

§. VI. The only queſtion then which remains, is, to know whether the facts and Miracles ſufficiently atteſted

human evidence, on which the chriſtian religion is founded, have all the characters and qualities neceſſary to form an invincible proof. Now, was there ever any thing ſo certain, ſo authentic and ſo well verified, as the miracles which demonſtrate the divinity of our religion? The whole univerſe hath borne a glorious teſtimony to the truth of their exiſtence, by it's faith and ſubmiſſion: they are atteſted in records, againſt which all the ſhafts of the moſt envenomed infidelity ſhall not be able to prevail. Theſe records bear ſuch ſtrong characters of ſincerity, as ſtifle every the leaſt ſuſpicion to the contrary. Their truth is confirmed by witneſſes ſo worthy, of credit, ſo incapable of being themſelves deceived, or of having wilfully deceived others; that any mind which makes uſe of it's reaſon has all the aſſurance it can deſire. The ancient enemies of the Chriſtian Religion never dared to charge with forgery thoſe facts on which it is ſupported: and no body would have been more ready than they to publiſh ſuch a diſcovery; it would have been a very eaſy matter to have detected the conſpiracy of thoſe men who had been deſirous

deſirous of ſeducing the whole world: It would have been impoſſible that, amongſt the multitude of thoſe who had concurred in it, (eſpecially as many of them were afterwards ſeparated,) no one, either incited by revenge, or by the love of truth, ſhould have laid open the fallacious ſcheme. In fine, Does the teſtimony of thoſe many martyrs, who have ſealed the truth of all theſe facts with their blood;—does a teſtimony like this, ſtill leave room for a ſingle doubt of their veracity?—*I*, ſays the celebrated Paſchal, *do readily believe the truth of thoſe hiſtories, whoſe witneſſes voluntarily ſuffered death in ſupport of it.*

The reſult of the whole matter then, is this: In order to invalidate the truth and authenticity of the miracles wrought in confirmation of our holy religion, we muſt of neceſſity unite to call in queſtion all the facts which have ever happened in the world: ſince no fact in the world is ſo well eſtabliſhed, as thoſe miracles evidently are.

But, leſt the infidel ſhould ſtill refuſe his aſſent to ſo many well atteſted miracles, we would leave no means unemployed to convince and confute him. §. VII.

The continuance of christianity, a miracle.

§. VII. Is not, then, the existence of the Christian Religion, thus supported and resolutely persevering, amidst so many oppositions as have been made against it in all ages, an ever visible and continual miracle? — what is more grand, more admirable, or more divine, than a religion, always at war, continually resisted, yet always victorious and triumphant!

No sooner does this religion make it's first appearance in the world, than it is persecuted on every side; principalities and powers, are up in arms to oppose it: christian blood, is every where seen to flow: and, by a miracle, capable of astonishing the most consummate infidelity; — a conspiracy formed against it, and such an one as would inevitably have annihilated a human institution, serves only to add new lustre and magnificence to that of the Christian Religion; a conspiracy, whose attempts, calculated for it's immediate destruction, tend only to render it more firm and immoveable. No punishments, not orments are spared: it's persecutors exhaust themselves in the invention of

new

new methods, to effect the deſtruction and overthrow of this riſing religion: nay, in order the more ſurely to ſucceed; they diveſt their ſouls of all thoſe ſentiments which humanity ſhould inſpire towards even the vileſt malefactors.

But all theſe refinements of human cruelty and injuſtice ſerve only the more to extend it: The more chriſtians are put to death, the more ſpring up anew; their blood became a fruitful ſeed, which failed not to produce others; and by that means chriſtianity found itſelf fully recompenced for all it's loſſes: In ſhort, by a prodigy which ſurpaſſes all conception, even the very perſecutors of this religion, according to the promiſes which were made to it, flocked in together themſelves to embrace it, to acknowledge it's divinity and to ſet their mark to it's ſeal.

If from it's perſecutions from without, we on to the attacks which this religion hath ſuſtained within itſelf; what muſt be our aſtoniſhment and admiration! How many ſtorms and tempeſts are ſtirred up againſt it, even in its boſom! How many inward enemies

mies; as powerful as the former — but so much the more dangerous, as they covered themselves with the mask of religion itself, in order to attack it — has it not had to encounter! How many heresies, schisms and divisions, suggested by hell; which must inevitably have destroyed christianity, had it derived it's origin from men! ——

A thousand times has it seemed to be upon the very brink of ruin, at the point of total destruction, and just ready to be buried in it's own shattered remains; but every time it has been reduced to this melancholy situation, GOD has rescued and upheld it by the extraordinary exertions of his power. The more imminent it's danger appeared, so much the more gloriously was his ever-watchful protection displayed: he had foretold and assured it that it should undergo these trials; and that promise, which rendered it superior to all the efforts of hell, hath always met with a faithful accomplishment.

Does any one perceive here the work of man; a work of falshood and deception? If the Christian Religion, were of this character, could

could it have reſiſted ſo many aſſaults combined to deſtroy it? Experience teaches us what would infallibly have been it's fate, if it had not been the work of GOD: all human undertakings find ſupport only in proportion to their eſtimation with the powers of the ſtate where they are ſet on foot: from the inſtant they have been deſerted by ſuch aſſiſtances, and thoſe powers have riſen up to oppoſe them; ſuch works of darkneſs have ſoon ſhrunk back to that nothingneſs and obſcurity, from whence they derived their original. This is what we have ſo often ſeen, with reſpect to all the ſects which have been formed to combat the Chriſtian Religion. Kingdoms themſelves would periſh, did they not frequently make the laws bend to their neceſſity: they could not preſerve themſelves, were they not ſometimes thus enfeebled: but then this weakneſs and pliancy inſenſibly leads them to their ruin; and thus it happens that there has not been one kingdom which hath laſted 1500 years. But the Chriſtian Religion hath never employed ſuch means for it's ſupport. It hath always upheld itſelf without bending and ſinking under the arbitrary

bitrary will of it's enemies and perſecutors; though it hath had to ſtruggle with oppoſitions, more violent than thoſe of kingdoms. — Could it have preſerved itſelf thus untouched, without an ever-viſible miracle, namely, the protection of GOD, exerted in it's favour? — We may therefore moſt rationally conclude, that the Chriſtian Religion is not only founded upon miracles; but that it is in itſelf, the greateſt of miracles, a miracle, continual and ever ſubſiſting.

Witneſſes to Chriſtian Miracles.

§. VIII. "If, ſays Rouſſeau, we would "receive as true all the miracles, which "the common and ignorant people through "every country of the world affirm to have "ſeen, every ſect would be in the right. "There would be more miraculous events "than natural ones, and the greateſt mi"racle of all would be to find that no mi"racles had happened where fanaticiſm had "been perſecuted. * "

The plain drift of which ſpeech, is merely to induce mankind to reject the miracles which authorize the Chriſtian Religion; as having no other witneſſes of their truth than the common and ignorant people.

The

* Vol. iii. p. 111.

The whole of what we have already obſerved on this ſubject of miracles, confutes theſe frivolous declamations and falſe pretences of infidelity. Were thoſe many diſtinguiſhed perſons who have engaged in the cauſe of the Chriſtian Religion, were thoſe many ſuperior geniuſes, who have born teſtimony to the veracity of our miracles, and whoſe abilities and ſagacity are well known; —were theſe nothing but common ignorant, people? — But, on what ground can Rouſſeau reject the people's evidence in favour of our Miracles? Are not they within the comprehenſion of the moſt ſimple minds? Is it neceſſary to be a philoſopher, or a geometrician, to be in a condition proper to form a judgment of them? the matter in queſtion is, Diſeaſes cured; cripples reſtored to their Limbs; dead bodies raiſed to life. Now, are not the common people, as well able to judge of theſe matters, as the moſt ſkilful Phyſician? — it needs only eyes to ſee a diſeaſed perſon, a cripple or a dead body; and theſe ſame eyes, can afterwards diſcern, whether the ſick man be in good health, the cripple's limbs reſtored; and whether the dead eat,

drink

drink and walk: every man, who has his ſight may eaſily know whether, from the bare ſpeaking or ſingle touch of another man, the ſick man received health, the cripple the free uſe of his limbs, and the dead body's reſtoration to life.

Miracles are, as it were, the alphabet of all religion. The end and deſign of them, is to place the ſublimeſt truths within every man's comprehenſion; and to open an eaſy entrance for all into that holy religion, which they authorize. Conſequently, the ignorant, as well as the learned, may paſs ſure judgment upon them.

The teſtimony of the people, with reſpect to the miracles of the Chriſtian Religion, is ſo much the more deciſive, as all the world knows with what obſtinacy the common people perſevere in that religion of their forefathers, which they have imbibed from their infancy. How clear then, how certain and convincing muſt thoſe miracles have been, which could impell them to renounce their primitive religion, in order to embrace chriſtianity!

§. IX.

§. IX. The moſt inattentive reader cannot have failed to obſerve, that Rouſſeau is a moſt vigilant advocate for infidelity; almoſt inexhauſtible in arguments. The reaſon of miracles.

In the IIId. volume of his Emilius p. 145. he goes on to furniſh us with new proofs of his indefatigable ſcepticiſm. "The "ſupreme Being, ſays he, is beſt diſplayed "by the fixed and unalterable laws of na- "ture. If there ſhould happen many ex- "ceptions to ſuch general laws, I ſhould "no longer know what to think: and for "my own part, I muſt confeſs, I believe "too much in GOD to credit ſo many "miracles, ſo little worthy of him."

Without doubt, the general order of nature perfectly diſplays the greatneſs of the ſupreme Being. But this order, thus perpetual and conſtant, ſhouts to the deafeſt ears, and ſpeaks aloud to the moſt obdurate hearts. This is a continual miracle, and one which comprehends a multitude of miracles: but yet in vain does it ſeek to call back mortals to the knowledge of their maker. We are accuſtomed to every object in nature: the

the great wonders of the world, are fallen into a kind of diſparagement and diſregard, and no longer ſtrike our attention, becauſe they are ever preſent. An obſerving mind, which religiouſly reflects on this compound of miracles, ſome more amazing than others, is, as it were, terrified at the contemplation: while all it's attention is inſufficient to deliberate upon, and conſider the vaſt variety.

Obſtupeſcit, obruiturque miraculis. St. Aug.

It is the ſame GOD, who every day works all thoſe miracles, wherewith nature is replete, and thoſe which are leſs common and more remarkable: But, becauſe cuſtom induces forgetfulneſs of the grandeur of the former; becauſe mankind, diverted by many objects, no longer attend to *ordinary* events, or take occaſion from them to elevate their mind, to their almighty diſpencer, and to render him that worſhip, which therefore is ſo juſtly his due: on theſe accounts, and in amazing condeſcenſion to our weakneſs, he hath graciouſly reſerved certain *extraordinary* events; which he aſſiduouſly takes care, from time to time, to produce, with a view to arouze mankind

kind, from their lethargy of negligence. If theſe leſs uſual miracles, have a more ſtriking effect upon us than others, it is not that they are more excellent than thoſe of which we are daily ſpectators; but that being leſs frequent, they render us more ſenſible of the preſence of their author.

Rouſſeau therefore is in the wrong to tell us, that the ſupreme Being is beſt diſplayed by the *unalterable* law of nature. Both equally diſplay him. For, in the ſame manner that this Being can preſerve that eſtabliſhed order of things, he can alſo at his pleaſure reverſe it: and, with reſpect to our diſpoſitions, the reverſing of this order, makes us ſtill more ſenſible of the exiſtence of a ſupreme Being.

The general law of nature would have been very ſufficient to make known to man the author of his being; but this law, ſo continually purſued, was inſufficient to ſhew him what were the particular inclinations of that divine Being: it was inſufficient fo the eſtabliſhment of a religion, ſuch an as might ſuit the condition of ſinful Man.

It therefore became neceſſary that the Deity in his wiſdom ſhould reſerve the means capable of evincing to mankind, that it was he himſelf who had propoſed ſuch and ſuch a doctrine to them, by thoſe perſons whom he had choſen to be his delegates and meſſengers. Now, what method was there more proportionate to the real ſtate of man, than that of miracles? — GOD hath engraven on the very foundation of our nature, ſentiments, which bear ſo intimate a relation with theſe means of conviction, that they would naturally bend our reaſon to their authority, did not our paſſions and prejudices intrude, and prevent their good effect.

Rouſſeau may tell us, as long as he pleaſes, that if there were many exceptions to the general law of nature, he ſhould not know what to think of them: But, as for *us* Chriſtians, we ſhall ever know what we ought to think of them; and that becauſe reaſon and religion join to teach us, that all theſe exceptions of what kind, or how numerous ſoever they be, are ordained by the infinite wiſdom of

of our GOD, in kindneſs and compaſſion for his creatures: We know, that their end and deſignation, is to inſtruct us, and to regulate our faith and opinions.

Weak mortal! who can venture to place the very confined views of his feeble reaſon, in competition with the inacceſſible effulgence of that reaſon, which is ſupreme and everlaſting. Unwiſe! who would oppoſe the vain prepoſſeſſions of *his* reaſon to the divinity of our miracles; and who believes the deity capable of forming only what *he* can underſtand and comprehend!—Tell me, O man! you, who pretend to ſo much reaſon and good ſenſe; Do you comprehend the œconomy of GOD in the general order of nature; and can you render a reaſon for all that he does in that immenſe ſphere of action?—Ah! why then, would you require me to give you the reaſon for all thoſe miracles, thoſe extraordinary effects, which the deity diſplays?—*Non opus eſt multa percurrere, de quotidianis rebus, nemo reddit rationem: et exigis à me de miraculis rationem?* — Ceaſe then, ungrateful mortal! to vilify the divi-

nity of our miracles: *noli calumniari divinitati miraculorum.* St. Aug.

Incredulous! who complains that GOD works too many miracles! and yet, may we fairly aſk, are there enow wrought for *him*; for his conviction, who can thus obſtinately perſiſt in his blindneſs? — He tells us "he believes too much in GOD to "credit ſo many miracles, ſo little worthy "of his nature." But let him rather ſay he does not believe in GOD at all; and that he is not in the leaſt deſirous of ſo believing; and that this is the true reaſon which induces him not to credit the miracles wrought by that GOD; miracles, which muſt neceſſarily force him to renounce his infidelity. Rouſſeau at moſt believes in that GOD which his extravagant imagination has contrived to frame: but the *true* GOD, the GOD of *the Chriſtians*, is no GOD for Rouſſeau.

The chriſtian miracles fit, proper, and benign.

§. X. Rouſſeau deems ſome miracles, as we find, very *little worthy* of the divine Being: What are thoſe miracles then, to which he ſo freely objects. This we ſhall proceed to conſider, and, if poſſible, comprehend;

hend; a difficult taſk but which perhaps we ſhall moſt eaſily perform by attending to thoſe which he deems on the contrary to be truly worthy of GOD! In his IIId. volume p. 145-6. he ſays, " What if a man " ſhould come and harangue you in this " manner " I come, ye mortals, to announce " to you the will of the moſt high; — ac- " knowledge in my voice that of Him who " hath ſent me. I command the ſun to " change his courſe, the ſtars to ſhift their " places; the mountains to diſappear; the " floods to fix themſelves on high, and the " earth to aſſume a different aſpect;—Who " would not, at the ſight of ſuch miracles " as theſe, immediately attribute them to the " author of nature? She is not obedient to " impoſtors."

You ſee here the miracles, which, alone, Rouſſeau deems to be worthy of the deity: But, as for the inſtantaneous curing of all ſorts of diſeaſes, wrought by a ſingle touch and the ſole act of ſpeech; the deliverance of thoſe poſſeſſed with devils, and the raiſing of dead bodies to life: — Rouſſeau makes light of them: He judges them un-

worthy of GOD, and requires others to be performed for his conviction: like thoſe blind and unbelieving phariſees and ſadducees, who, after having been eye witneſſes of the many cures performed by JESUS CHRIST, ſtill aſked of him ſigns from heaven, to convince them. *Mark* viii. 11. Deceived and blind! who, knowing no bounds to their hardened and ſtubborn infidelity, ſeek ſtill farther to tempt the almighty, and to find pretences for confirming their obſtinacy. Would it not be fruitleſs if GOD ſhould grant them their unrighteous demand? was he to do ſo, they would not become more faithful: —after having excepted againſt ſo many miracles juſt wrought before their faces, would they ever the more believe thoſe which they preſcribed him to perform? — Might they not make a ridicule of them, equally with the others, by attributing them to different latent cauſes in nature; or to the various accidents *incidental to the air* *?

For you, who can *blaſpheme* ſo many miracles, miracles which your eyes have

* Quaſi non poſſint et illa calumniari, et dicere ex occultis and variis aëriis paſſionibus accidiſſe. St. Hieron in Matt. cap. xiii.

ſeen,

ſeen, your hands handled, and whoſe whole utility you clearly perceive; what advantage could you derive from the ſigns which heaven ſhould afford you * ?

Rouſſeau, copying after the apoſtate *Julian*, teſtifies nothing but ſcorn and contempt for the miracles, which GOD hath hitherto performed. " What miracles, ſays " the impious Julian, did JESUS perform " through his whole life, that deſerved " mention; unleſs we will allow a place " among the number of extraordinary works, " to his curing the lame and blind, and the " expulſion of devils in the villages of " Bethſaida and Bethany † ? "

" Julian, replies St. Cyril, by venturing to reject the divine miracles of JESUS CHRIST, ſhews us, that he knew not how to admire what was worthy admiration. How could JESUS CHRIST better prove his divinity, and better eſtabliſh his religion ?--by producing a

* Nam qui calumniaris ea quæ oculis vides, manu tenes, ulititate ſentis, quid facturus es de his, quæ de cœlo venerint ? —

† Jeſus, quo vixit tempore, nullum opus fecit mirabile, niſi quis claudos et cœcos curare, et demones adjurare in Bethſaïda et Bethania opus eſſe maximus putet. S. Cyril. Lib. vi. in Julian.

wild

wild confuſion and diſorder in the heavens?— by making another earth ſpring out of the world of waters? — or by diſcovering new wonders in the ſun, moon and ſtars? — No; this was not the end of our Lord's incarnation: he came not to aſtoniſh men and to ſatisfy their vain curioſity; but he came to deliver them from all thoſe ſpiritual and corporal miſeries, which overwhelmed them; and to reſcue them from that two-fold ſlavery under which they groaned: he was pleaſed to recall us to the knowledge of truth of which we had deprived ourſelves; and, in order to ſucceed in that gracious purpoſe, condeſcended, that his miracles, equally bearing the ſtamp of his goodneſs and his power, ſhould inſpire us with a juſt confidence to return to him. His great plan was to point out in his miracles, a lively and ſenſible repreſentation of thoſe effects which they ought to produce in our ſouls. And as corporal diſeaſes are the moſt natural reſemblance of ſpiritual maladies, he hath in the miraculous cure of the former, painted thoſe of the latter kind, which ſhould properly follow, or accompany them; is there any thing more beautiful, more noble, and

more

more worthy of the godhead, than theſe multiplied, and concurrent effects of divine goodneſs and omnipotence? Could the eternal wiſdom, the word of the father, the creator of man, do any thing more worthy of his nature, than thus to reſtore his work to its firſt eſtate; thus to heal the body, in order to conduct us to the cure of the ſoul; and thus to become the ſaviour of our nature from all the evils which afflict it?"

"What more conſiſtent with the great-
"neſs of GOD," ſays Lactantius (addreſſing himſelf to the adverſaries of the Chriſtian Religion) "what more worthy the admira-
"tion of all ages, than to have renewed ex-
"piring life; to have given back years already
"elapſed; — to have enlightened the ſecret
"horrors of the grave*?" This ineffable power, however, was but the image of another ſtill greater: and demonſtrated the future efficacy of JESUS CHRIST's doctrine throughout the world, in turning

* Quid congruentius Deo, quid miraculo dignius omnium ſeculorum, quam decurſam vitam reſignâſſe, completiſque hominum temporibus tempora adjeciſſe, arcana mortis revelâſſe?

mankind

mankind from darkneſs to light, from death to immortality.

Muſt we not be as incredulous as a Rouſſeau, to be inſenſible of miracles which denote ſuch excellence and kindneſs? — Rouſſeau aſſures us, he would inſtantly attribute to the LORD of nature the performance of thoſe miracles which he demands; "Becauſe, ſays "he, nature is never obedient to impoſtors." Will he then dare to ſay, and will he be able to prove to us, that at the voice of an impoſtor the dead may revive, the blind ſee, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the palſied recover the uſe of their limbs, and all other maladies, be cured? — How could he broach ſo deteſtable a blaſphemy? — He can certainly find no one example, to countenance it. Why then does he delay the homage due to a religion, whoſe grandeur and excellence are proclaimed by ſo many miracles, and thoſe ſo evidently divine? In vain does the preſent generation of infidels demand other ſigns and wonders. They have more already than are requiſite to render them inexcuſable. The ſigns they aſk will one day be granted to their confuſion. The heavens and

and earth, and the whole frame of nature ſhall confeſs their Lord? And the impious unbeliever, after having ungratefully refuſed to acknowledge his GOD and SAVIOUR in the gracious ſigns of his *kindneſs* and *mercy*, ſhall then behold himſelf forced to acknowledge him in the terrible and dreadful ſigns of his *anger* and his *juſtice*.

Miracles prove the truth of a doctrine. A ſurvey of ſcripture in that light.

§ XI. The miracles wrought in favour of revelation ſufficiently demonſtrate that it can contain nothing contrary to ſound reaſon. Rouſſeau, as we have ſeen, makes uſe of every effort in his power to controvert their exiſtence, under the poor pretence that he *has not ſeen them*. But, ſenſible that he could not long maintain that poſt, he has reſerved to himſelf a laſt entrenchment; and, accordingly he gives out, that, admitting the *truth* of our *miracles*, we could never the more ſtrongly conclude in ſupport of the truth of our *doctrine*: In order to eſtabliſh which point, he reaſons as follows *:

"The moſt important examination, after "all, remains to be made into the truth of

* See vol. iii. p. 147.

"the

" the doctrines delivered: for, as thoſe who " ſay that GOD is pleaſed to work theſe " miracles, pretend that the Devil ſome- " times imitates them; we are not a jot " nearer than before, though ſuch miracles " ſhould be ever ſo well atteſted. As the " magicians of Pharaoh worked the ſame " miracles, even in the preſence of Moſes, " as he himſelf performed by the expreſs " command of GOD; why might not they, " in his abſence from, the like proofs, pre- " tend to the ſame authority? Thus, after " having proved the truth of the doctrine " by the miracle, you are reduced to the " neceſſity of proving the truth of the mi- " racle by that of the doctrine, leſt the work " of the Devil ſhould be miſtaken for that " of the LORD." " *This*, he adds in a note on the paſſage, is expreſly mentioned in many *places of ſcripture*".

This argument has no other foundation than falſe *ſuppoſitions*. He would here endeavour to turn our own weapons againſt us, by allowing, for that purpoſe, ſome authority to the ſcriptures, and to our divines. But, in order fully to confute this artful rea-

ſoner

ſoner, and clear up the point in queſtion, we will make it our buſineſs to ſhew, by *ſcripture* and *tradition*.

That every true miracle, merely as ſuch, authoriſes us to infer the truth of the doctrine, in favour of which it is performed.— That what is truly a miracle can never be joined with a falſhood, or a vicious doctrine. — That the authority of miracles is ever independant of the diſcuſſions of the doctrine, and of the circumſtances which accompany it; and that no true miracle can be employed to turn mankind from that path of duty which the Deity had preſcribed to them. — That if the Devil can never work true miracles, God can ſtill leſs work thoſe which are connected with error, in order to tempt mankind, or prover their fidelity. — And laſtly, That true miracles are an authentic teſtimony of the approbation of God, and a certain proof of the diſplay of his truth and righteouſneſs.

Such is the plain doctrine which tradition, and our Divines, in common conſent with the ſcriptures, inculcate and recommend to our faith.

faith. We think it incumbent upon us, therefore, to vindicate what they have thus propoſed, from the affronts and indignity which Rouſſeau has thought proper to offer it.

For this purpoſe we begin with ſcripture: and we will beg leave firſt to make ſome general remarks.

The ALMIGHTY, in ſcripture, attributes to himſelf the ſole right and prerogative of working true miracles. Pſal. lxxii. 18.

He propoſeth to his people the miracles which he performs, as a certain and deciſive proof, that he is the only true GOD, and that beſides him there is no other, Deut. iv.

He defieth the GODS of the nations who are Devils, to work miracles like his, Iſai. xli. and promiſeth, even to acknowledge them for GODS, if they could do ſo.

He hath alſo, in ſeveral places of ſcripture, and eſpecially by the mouth of his prophets, very expreſſly declared, that there is none like him, who can heal our infirmities, who hath the power of life and of death, who

who carrieth down to the gates of the grave, and bringeth back from thence, Pſ. cii. 20. Wiſd. xiii. xvi. He ſolemnly proteſts to the worſhipers of falſe GODS, that they aſked health of thoſe who were but weakneſs, and required life of the dead: and he aſſures them, that theſe GODS cannot deliver from death, or give ſight to the blind, or adminiſter ſuccour to men under their calamities.

But let us deſcend to thoſe particular obſervations on ſacred ſcripture, which more immediately tend to confirm our firſt propoſition; namely, that every true miracle, merely as ſuch, authoriſes us to infer from thence the truth of the doctrine in favour whereof it is performed.

The LORD appears to MOSES upon Mount Horeb, and declares to him his intention of ſending him into Ægypt, to deliver his people, the children of Iſrael, from the bondage under which they had ſo long groaned. Moſes excuſes himſelf; and would willingly avoid executing the commiſſion of GOD: *They will not believe me*, ſays he to the ALMIGHTY,

MIGHTY, *but they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Exod. iii. iv.

The LORD then, in order to convince Moſes, that ſuch is his will, performs ſeveral miracles before his face, and inveſts him with power to repeat them before the children of Iſrael, to the end they ſhould believe, that the LORD, the GOD of their fathers' had certainly appeared to him.

Moſes, in conſequence of this aſſurance, ſubmits, and departs to execute the commands of GOD; he aſſembles together all the elders of the children of Iſrael; Aaron relates to them all that the LORD had ſpoken to Moſes, and works miracles before the people. The people believe him, and all of them, proſtrating themſelves, adore the ALMIGHTY in his wonderful acts.

Now, if miracles afforded not a certain demonſtration of truth, why ſhould GOD have given them to Moſes, as an evident token of the divinity of his miſſion? How could Moſes have been ſatisfied with them, and have believed, without the power to doubt any

any longer the divinity of him who ſpoke to him? And why, in ſhort, ſhould the Iſraelites have ſo readily believed the word of Moſes, confirmed by miracles? Neither of them would have failed to conſider ſuch a proof as very equivocal, and ſubject to numerous deceptions.

Moſes preſents himſelf before Pharaoh, and commands him, on the part of God, to let the Hebrew people go into the wilderneſs, that they might ſacrifice to him. To prove his divine miſſion, and to perſuade the king, he works ſeveral miracles before him. Pharaoh's heart is hardened: he refuſes to obey the injunction of God, and gives no creditto Moſes's miracles. And what is the the conſequence? He, his people, and dominions, are ſmitten with a multitude of plagues, in puniſhment of his infidelity, and to convince his obſtinacy. — But wherefore is all this? If miracles are not of themſelves deciſive, if they may be connected with falſehood, or if the Devil may work them, where is the crime of Pharaoh and the Ægyptians? How did they merit ſuch ſevere chaſtiſements? Was not every circum-

ſtance in their favour, and a juſtification of their conduct? — They refuſed, it is true, to releaſe the Iſraelites, notwithſtanding the miracles of Moſes; but, did not they act prudently, and was not their refuſal reaſonable, in caſe thoſe miracles were not in themſelves an indubitable token of the truth of what he advanced?

Reaſon requires of us to yield to that evidence only which bears with it a certain character of truth. The miracles, therefore, which GOD wrought by the hand of Moſes, muſt have been an infallible and inconteſtible proof of his will: ſo, that the Ægyptians were culpable for not yielding their aſſent to them: thus, by a juſt conſequence, the terrible chaſtiſements wherewith the Deity afflicts them, fully teach us, that true miracles conſtitute ſo perfect a demonſtration, as no one can reſiſt, without reſiſting the Deity himſelf.

Moſes leaves Egypt with the Iſraelites; and conducts them into the wilderneſs, purſuant to the command he had received for that purpoſe. GOD ſtill further multiplies miracles

miracles in their favour; a cloud covers them during the day, and a moſt aſtoniſhing pillar illuminates them during the night: Purſued by the Ægyptians, the ſea opens before them; it's ſeparated water yields them a free paſſage: the Ægyptians take the ſame rout: Moſes extends his hand over the waves: they ruſh forward with their uſual impetuoſity; and Pharaoh, and all his hoſt, are ſwallowed in the deep. From that time, GOD continually works miracles by the miniſtry of Moſes: the detail of which would be too long for our preſent purpoſe.

And yet — notwithſtanding all this, the Iſraelites, ungrateful and rebellious, murmur continually againſt Moſes, and are ever ready to form an inſurrection againſt him; teſtifying only bitter regret, at having left their ancient ſervitude. *How long,* ſays the Lord, *will this people provoke me by their outrages? How long will they refuſe to believe in me, after all the ſigns which I have ſhewed among them?* Numb. xiv. 11. *All thoſe men, who have ſeen the ſplendor of my glory, and my miracles which I did*

in Ægypt; and who, far from obeying my voice, have tempted me now these ten times: I swear by myself that they shalt not see the land which I sware unto their fathers. Numb. xiv. 22, 23.

We see from hence, how necessary it is, that true miracles should be decisive proofs in themselves; that they should always be a sure and authentic testimony of the divine approbation; and that no one should possibly be able to resist their voice without disobeying that of GOD: for were it otherwise, how could GOD be provoked at the refusal, which the Jews signified, to submit to that kind of evidence? or how could he pronounce so terrible a decree against their incredulity? If true miracles are equivocal tokens of the will and commands of GOD; if they may be joined with falsehood; and if the devil can effect them; would not the Israelites have had a very reasonable excuse for their conduct? "Is it certain, might "they have said, that GOD is the author "of these miracles? and, though he should "be so, might we not still doubt of their "end and design? might we not have a

"reason

" reaſon to fear they were wrought merely " to tempt us, to ſearch our hearts and to try " our fidelity? " But they were far from uſing ſuch a language, and they found how much they had been in the wrong, to reſiſt ſuch convincing proofs. The ſevere vengeance which GOD exerciſed upon them, unanſwerably demonſtrates the falſhood of ſuch frivolous pretences; it will be forever an invincible monument of the irrefragable authority of miracles; and ſtill loudly publiſhes, what they ought to expect, who dare to controvert or reject them.

Let us here call back in review ſome other facts, which, added to the foregoing, will form the completeſt proof deſireable; —No ſooner had Elijah raiſed the widow of Sarepta's ſon, than that tender mother, bathed in tears, cried out, in the joy of her heart: *Now by this I know that thou art a man of* GOD; *and that the word of the Lord which is in thy mouth is truth*, 1 Kings xvii. 24.

No ſooner is *Naaman* cured of his leproſy, than he acknowledges the miracle; and; without

without any further inquiry, cries out, *Now I know there is no other God in all the earth, than Him who is in Israel!* 2 Kings v. 15. From thenceforward he declares to the prophet, he will no more worship any other than that GOD, whose divinity his miraculous cure compelled him to acknowledge.

From the moment the children of Israel beheld fire fall down from heaven upon Elijah's sacrifice, convinced by so decisive a proof all their doubts were dispersed; they presently with one voice confessed, *The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!* and immediately exterminated the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings xviii.

Such is the impression which true miracles have always made: such the force and authority they have ever preserved: such the effect they have continually produced, of themselves, and wholly independant of circumstances. So soon as ever their voice hath made itself heard; men have desired nothing more ardently than to submit themselves to what that voice authorized. If sometimes

times they have refuſed aſſent to their teſtimony, it was doing violence to themſelves, and reſiſting by the force of their paſſions and the blindneſs of their prejudices, that natural impreſſion which miracles could not fail of making upon their minds. Let us purſue our tradition of facts, and we ſhall preſently ſee a ſtriking example.

JESUS CHRIST appears amongſt the Jews: He opens his miſſion by a variety of aſtoniſhing miracles: He declares himſelf the meſſenger of GOD; his own ſon; him, who had been the deſire of the ſaints, in all ages; him, whom the prophets had ſo conſtantly foretold: He requires no one to believe him on his bare word: but, to prove what he advances, he works miracles without number: cauſes the deaf to hear, the dumb to ſpeak; gives ſight to the blind, and limbs to the lame; cures the palſied; and, to ſum up all in one word, makes the dead to ſpring from their graves: — For theſe proofs he requires to be believed, and for theſe *good works*, demands to be gratefully acknowledged.

St. John

St. John ſends two of his diſciples to CHRIST, to aſk him whether he was the Meſſiah: — What anſwer does he return them? "*Go, and ſhew John again thoſe things* "*which ye do hear and ſee: The blind* "*receive their ſight; the lame walk; the* "*lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear; the* "*dead ariſe.*"

One who was poſſeſſed with a blind and dumb ſpirit, is preſented to JESUS: he ſo perfectly reſtores the man, that he ſpeaks and ſees. The phariſees hereupon, to ſtifle the impreſſion which this miracle had upon the minds of the people, pretend that JESUS caſts out devils, only through the power of Beelzebub. JESUS, who knew their thoughts, ſhews them that he cannot through the power of Satan caſt out Satan, becauſe Satan cannot be divided againſt himſelf. After having clearly demonſtrated, that his expulſion of devils could only be through the ſpirit, and with the finger of GOD; he draws this natural concluſion from the argument. *If I, then, with the finger of God caſt out devils; you ought to believe that the king-*

dom

dom of God is come unto you: "There is no middle way of deciding the matter; no ground to heſitate on the deſign of the miracle I have performed: it can come only from GOD; and conſequently it clearly proves, that the kingdom of GOD is come unto you; becauſe it was deſigned ſolely to eſtabliſh that kingdom." Luke xi. 14,—20.

A paralytic is brought to CHRIST: He ſaith, to him, *My ſon, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* The phariſees upon this accuſe him of blaſphemy; JESUS, to ſhew them the falſhood of their accuſation anſwer, them; *That you may know that the ſon of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins,—ariſe* [turning to the paralytic] *take up thy bed, and go unto thine houſe:* inſtantly the before palſied perſon riſes up, takes his bed upon his ſhoulders, and returns to his houſe, glorifying GOD; — It follows then from hence, and the foregoing inſtances, that JESUS CHRIST eſteemed the miracles which he here performed, as demonſtrative proofs of that power, which ſome diſputed with him. From hence too we learn, that the true miracle cannot have the devil for its author: and that it cannot be connected with error

and

and falſhood: ſince its nature and end are to diſſipate all doubts, and to determine every controverſy. Could a true miracle be wrought for the countenancing of error; it would not prove, it would not decide, any thing of itſelf, or in the leaſt tend to ſettle or remove our doubts. And ſuch was the very judgment which all the ſpectators paſſed on this laſt miracle of our Saviour: the moment it was performed, without requiring any thing further, all of them changed from anger to admiration, and, ſmitten with deep aſtoniſhment, gave glory to GOD. No one had any thing to oppoſe againſt ſuch evidence; but, the warm tranſport of their gratitude cried out, "We have this day beheld wonderful things indeed; nor have we ever ſeen any thing like them!" Such is the natural effect which true miracles have conſtantly produced; ſuch is the conviction, which they ordinarily carry home even to the moſt prejudiced minds.

In ſhort, to abridge that multitude of proofs which might be brought in confirmation

mation of what we have advanced, we will only generally obſerve here, — that whenever JESUS is accuſed, calumniated or affronted by the Jews, he conſtantly refers them to his miracles, as the fulleſt proof of the divinity of his miſſion, and the moſt perfect apology to every accuſation which might be formed againſt him. *The works that I do*, ſays he, *the ſame bear witneſs of me. If you will not believe me, at leaſt believe my works.* He declares to the Jews, that if he had not done among them all theſe miracles, they would have committed no ſin in refuſing to believe him. Conſequently, we may infer, that true miracles have, and can *only* have GOD for their author, and the eſtabliſhment of truth for their end. Otherwiſe thoſe of JESUS CHRIST would have been but an equivocal proof, and the Jews would no more have been blameable for not believing them, than if CHRIST had never performed them at all.

And now we will beg leave to aſk Rouſſeau, where are thoſe *ſeveral paſſages* of ſcripture, which he pretends to oppoſe againſt

againſt us? — After texts ſo expreſs as thoſe we have quoted, we ſhall ſurely be diſpenſed with from entering into the diſcuſſion of thoſe pretended ones he hints at. Our ſcriptures cannot ſo groſſly contradict themſelves: they are wholly founded and ſupported on the authority of miracles: and the religion they are calculated to eſtabliſh, has the ſame foundation. How then can it be poſſible that theſe very ſcriptures ſhould labour to deſtroy it?

Rouſſeau, having aſſerted that "after proving the truth of the doctrine by the miracle wrought to confirm it, it would "be neceſſary to prove the truth of the "miracle, by that of the doctrine; leſt the "works of the devil ſhould be miſtaken for "thoſe of the LORD;" adds, in a note upon theſe words, that "this is expreſly mentioned "in *many places* in ſcripture." Now there is nothing more eaſy than to vent ſuch vague allegations; In order to deceive unwary minds, we may with a ſingle flouriſh of a pen, give authority to what is the moſt oppoſite to our own apprehenſions, and the moſt inconſiſtent with truth: We would freely acquit Rouſſeau

Rouſſeau of that variety of paſſages he boaſts of, for a ſingle one, which ſhould expreſly ſignify what he has been pleaſed to affirm. But all thoſe we have already quoted convinces us that he will ſearch in vain for what we aſk of him. It is true he cites a paſſage in Deuteronomy*, where it is ſaid, That " if a prophet, teaching the worſhip " of falſe gods, ſhall pretend to have dream- " ed a dream; and ſhall, in confirmation of " his pretenſions, produce ſome ſign or won- " der; and what he foretells comes really " to paſs: and he ſhall afterwards ſay, " come, let us follow ſtrange gods; ſo far " from paying any regard to him, the peo- " ple ſhould ſtone him to death. "

But the queſtion here is not concerning true miracles or prodigies, comparable with thoſe that eſtabliſh the divinity of our religion: for if the matter in hand had been the working of *true* miracles, how could God afterwards conſent that he himſelf would acknowledge the devils as gods, in caſe they could foretel future and hidden events, or do either good or evil? " *Let*

* Chap. xiii.

your

" *your gods*; ſaysh e, by his prophet Iſaiah *,
" *come, and ſhew us what ſhall happen: let*
" *them ſhew the former things what they be*;
" *yea, ſhew us the things that are to come*
" *hereafter, that we may know that ye are*
" *gods, and: becauſe we would know that ye*
" *are gods, do good or evil if you can, that*
" *we may be aſtoniſhed at your power, and*
" *behold its effects together.*"

Now, ſince GOD himſelf promiſes to own the devils as gods, if they can but produce true miracles; might he not afterwards prohibit his people from acknowledging them as ſuch, and worſhiping them, if they had been ſo inclined? GOD—could, no more than man, place in the number of gods thoſe who were not ſo. The proofs of power, therefore, which he demands of them muſt certainly ſurpaſs their ability: and the queſtion, upon that text of Deuteronomy, is only concerning thoſe vain deluſions, which, by a falſe appearance, might dazzle and impoſe upon inattentive minds; and that ſpecies of prodigy which GOD makes it his glory to deſtroy and confound, by the truth and ſolidity of his own.

* Ch. xliv. v. 22.

I am

I am he, ſays GOD by his prophet, *that fruſtrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, that turneth wiſe men backward, and maketh their knowledge fooliſh**.

In ſhort, this very text which Rouſſeau cites for a contrary purpoſe, ſpeaks as clearly; and declares to us in expreſs terms, that the pretended prophet ſhould be conſidered only as an impoſtor, as a cheat; and, in a word as a mere inventor or dreamer of dreams. *Fictor Somniorum.* See Deut. xiii. 5.

St. Auſtin, and others of our beſt interpreters, unite in applying theſe words in Deuteronomy to the falſe prodigies of ſoothſayers, magicians and other people of that kind; who, notwithſtanding with all the helps of their art could never produce any thing which came near to the extraordinary effects of the divine power. Rouſſeau therefore ſhould join with us in admitting a great difference between the deluſions of devils, — the vain phantoms of idolatry, — and the miracles of the Chriſtian Religion†.

* Iſaiah xliv. 25.

† *Sicut autem diſcernuntur divinationes, quas conſequenter prohibet, à prædictionibus vel annuntiationibus prophetarum;*

Whenever

Whenever Rouſſeau is inclined to allow authority to the ſacred ſcriptures, let him learn to read them otherwiſe than he has done in this particular inſtance: let him not read them as merely profane hiſtories: but, let him there ſearch ſincerely after that truth, which his blind, yet haughty reaſon will never find of itſelf. With theſe diſpoſitions let him examine our religion by the light of the ſacred books, as much as he will; he will then find all his weak objections vaniſh and diſappear; and, forced to confeſs the darkneſs of his mind, and the errors of his preſumptuous ſagacity, he will gladly imitate the many great men who have gone before him, in an humble ſubmiſſion to the objects revealed; and thus render the Chriſtian Religion an homage as juſtly merited as their's.

Heathens unjuſtifiable in puniſhing Chriſtians.

§. XII. It may be proper to remark the concluſion, which our author deduces from his premiſes. "When the pagans therefore, "put the apoſtles to death for preaching "up to them the worſhip of a *ſtrange God*; "proving their divine miſſion by prophe-

ſic illæ inſpectiones prodigiorum à ſignificationibus divinorum miraculorum diſcernendæ ſunt. St. Aug. Lib. v. quæſt. xxix. in Deut.

"cies

" cies and miracles; I ſee not what could " be ſubſtantially objected to their proceed- " ing, which they might not with equal ju- " ſtice have immediately retorted upon us."

What a fatal blindneſs of heart doth this ſpeech diſcover in it's author! To call the Almighty, the only true GOD, that very deity whoſe glory and whoſe name the idols uſurped, a *ſtrange God!* — To dare to advance, that, *when the Pagans put the apoſtles to death, who proved their miſſion by predictions and miracles*; he *does not ſee what could be ſubſtantially objected againſt them, which they might not inſtantly retort!* what diſingenuity, or malice, or ignorance is this! The Pagans, more enlightened and more ſincere than Rouſſeau, were very ſenſible they had nothing ſubſtantial to oppoſe againſt ſuch convincing arguments. Idolatry, confounded with the ſplendor of them, beheld all it's efforts rendered ineffectual againſt ſo ſtrong a barrier. But the infidel, whoſe inclinations better correſpond with idolatry, than with the Chriſtian Religion, beholds with a ſecret ſpite the latter, riſing upon the ruins of the other; and would have felt no

concern, had the heathens exterminated every Chriſtian.

Such indeed are the horrible conſequences naturally reſulting from thoſe falſe and impious principles, which he has advanced on the ſcore of miracles. Had all mankind been poſſeſſed in like manner with Rouſſeau, they muſt have purſued the ſame dangerous conduct, as he here endeavours to chalk out for our practice: and yet the conduct which he has himſelf adopted, invincibly proves, that he has quite a different opinion of the ſtrength and authority of true miracles. We cannot help thinking however, that Rouſſeau as a bare profeſſor of Chriſtianity, at leaſt, ſhould bluſh and be confounded at having advanced ſuch principles, as, from his own evidence, tend directly to eterniſe idolatry, and the worſhip of devils.

The faith and religious ſubmiſſion of the univerſe to the miracles wrought by the apoſtles, are a glorious evidence in their favour; an evidence, which will always unanſwerably prove, that they are in themſelves an authority completely deciſive; and that nothing

nothing could be *ſubſtantially* objected againſt them. Indeed, what could be objected to them? Was it that miracles were not a certain proof of what the apoſtles aſſerted, becauſe, as Rouſſeau affirms, the *devil* could perform the like? — But would not the common opinion and experience of all ages, have contradicted ſuch a pretence? Did not the moſt enlightened Pagans prevent it, by owning before-hand, that their gods could work no ſuch miracles, as they then ſaw performed by the miniſtry of the apoſtles? With how many teſtimonies from the moſt celebrated authors might I not confute our infidel's argument? If in ſhort, the devil could imitate the miracles wrought by the apoſtles, why did he not then exerciſe that power? He never found himſelf in circumſtances which more preſſingly required it, or that were more proper, to excite his putting it in practiſe. The extinction of his worſhip, the ruin of his empire, and the very rapid progreſs of the goſpel, were, ſurely, motives fully ſufficient to call forth his utmoſt efforts for the obſcuring the luſtre of the apoſtolic miracles, and weakening their impreſſion. He did not

perform any thing which might produce this effect: his silence and inaction therefore, are a palpable mark of his debility and impotence.

Rousseau *does not see what could be substantially objected to the Pagans.* Why! have not our apologists an hundred times reduced to nothing, whatever they were able to urge in opposition to the Christian Religion? Let Rousseau but read their glorious apologies, and he will see with what superiority our religion triumphs over the frivolous objections started by the Pagans against it. It is sufficient, narrowly to observe the conduct of the Pagans towards those irreproachable men, who were the glory and happiness of whole cities and states, and the unheard of persecutions, which they made them undergo, in order to comprehend how far violence made up for the deficiency of good and solid arguments against them.

Human reason weak, and incapable, alone, of discovering religious truths.

§. XIII. After having found fault with the conduct of the whole world; Rousseau would now willingly bring round the adoption of that which he is pleased to offer. He reasons thus — "Now what is to be done "in

" in this caſe? There is but one ſtep to be " taken: to recur to Reaſon, and leave mi- " racles to themſelves; better indeed had " it been, never to have had recourſe to " them at all, nor to have perplexed good " ſenſe, with ſuch a number of — *very ſub-* " *tle diſtinctions* to ſay the beſt of them.— " What do I talk of? *Subtle diſtinctions in* " *chriſtianity!* If there are any ſuch, our " Saviour was in the wrong, ſurely, to " promiſe the kingdom of heaven to the " ſimple; and to bleſs the *poor in ſpirit*, " if it requires ſo much ingenuity to com- " prehend and believe his doctrines?"* So then, we find, that it is good ſenſe which dictates our leaving miracles to themſelves; and recurring to reaſon! And therefore all thoſe who have followed the call of miracles, and left the guidance of mere unenlightened reaſon for that purpoſe, have not been led by good ſenſe in the purſuit. Thoſe, on the contrary, who, deſpiſing the authority of ſo many miracles, have perſevered in impiety and irreligion, and have perſecuted chriſtians with the utmoſt rigor; are they, who have liſtened to good ſenſe and ſound reaſon. What excellent good ſenſe and reaſoning is this!

* Vol. iii. p. 113. in the note.

Can a man make a better uſe of his reaſon, than by ſubmitting himſelf to the authority of GOD, ſpeaking to him by miracles? and, on the contrary, can he be guilty of a greater abuſe of, or act in a manner more oppoſite to, true good ſenſe, than by leaving miracles to themſelves in order to recur to reaſon? Into what an abyſs may not ſuch a ſyſtem plunge him?—What is become of all thoſe, who, like Rouſſeau, have embraced it? Idolatry, irreligion and diſorders of every kind, have been the worthy fruits of their adherence.

Rouſſeau is deſirous of bringing all religion back again to reaſon. But was reaſon able to comprehend and penetrate whatever the Deity has been pleaſed to reveal to her? and could not GOD, therefore, reveal to his creature that which his feeble reaſon might be unable to comprehend? Where is that human reaſon which can comprehend the exiſtence of one GOD in three perſons of the ſame nature and ſubſtance? By the aids of what reaſon could it be diſcovered that a GOD became man, and expired upon a croſs,

in

in the ſame manner, as if he were one of the worſt of malefactors, in order to expiate an offence committed four thouſand years before? where is the man, who, by the ſole light of his reaſon, could gain intelligence of the ſtate of mankind; of the fall; of the incomprehenſible effects of original ſin; of the need of a Redeemer; of the reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal happineſs and miſery?—We may judge what our reaſon is capable of, by the vain efforts GOD permitted it to uſe, before the ſending his own Son to enlighten and inſtruct it. He was willing, that a ſad and long experience ſhould demonſtrate it's darkneſs and impotence:—Thus, into how many miſtakes and errors, did thoſe men fall, who paſſed for the moſt enlightened! what diviſions amongſt philoſophers concerning the happineſs and deſignation of man! Into how many different ſects were they not divided upon the moſt important points!—They were never able to comprehend or reconcile that fund of greatneſs and excellence, which man bore within him; with thoſe baſe and irregular ſentiments, which united in his ſoul; as we have ſhewn in a former diſſertation.

In vain, therefore, O man! do you ſeek within yourſelf, for the remedy of your miſeries: all your intelligence can only ſerve to inform you, that not in yourſelf, can you find either truth or happineſs. The philoſophers have promiſed you them, as Rouſſeau has done, and yet have been unable to procure them for you. They neither knew what is your true happineſs nor your real ſtate. How ſhould they have given you remedies for your miſeries, ſeeing they did not even know what thoſe miſeries were? Your principal maladies are, that *Pride*, which alienates you from your GOD, and that *Concupiſcence* which attaches you to earthly gratifications: Now, thoſe ſagacious preceptors have ſerved no other purpoſe than that of augmenting and indulging them. If they repreſented GOD as your object, it was but to exerciſe your pride, while they would lead you to think yourſelf like him in your nature. Thoſe, on the contrary, who perceived the folly of this deſign, threw you from the oppoſite precipice, by giving you to underſtand that your nature reſembled that of the beaſts which periſh; and by inducing you to ſearch after your happineſs

happineſs, in the indulgence of thoſe ſenſual appetites, of which the brute animals equally partake. See then, in this inſtance, whither reaſon, left to itſelf, would have conducted you. It is owing therefore to the moſt deplorable want of diſcernment, that Rouſſeau would recall you to a dependence upon it, and make faith and revelation ſubject to it's controul. The beſt uſe we can make of our reaſon, is by humbly ſubmitting it to both theſe; and acknowledging that there is an infinite number of things, which ſurpaſs it's comprehenſion.

Faith is the only means whereby to make up for the deficiency of our reaſon: It is her merit to be ignorant of that which yet ſhe believes, and to hope for that which ſhe doth not know. There is nothing more great and noble than ſuch a faith: It is GOD alone on whom ſhe relies; and it is upon his teſtimony, ſhe reſigns herſelf to his diſpoſal, and ſubmits to his determinations. The more ſuperior to reaſon things revealed appear, and the more difficult they are to be conceived, ſo much the more doth ſhe acknowledge the inſcrutable excellence of

that

that Infinite Being whom ſhe adores: and that obſcurity which excites her aſtoniſhment is to her a proof of veracity.

The greateſt advantage man can have received, and which places him in the beſt ſituation to render his creator a duty and homage worthy of him, is, " that, ſuperior, " as the Deity is, to his underſtanding; yet " he is not ſuperior to his belief; and that " he can place a kind of equality between " the incomprehenſible majeſty of GOD, " and an illimitable Faith".

It is true, GOD does not expect we ſhould ſubmit our faith to him, without the concurrence of reaſon; nor that we ſhould compulſively become ſubject to what he is pleaſed to propoſe. But then too he does not mean to give us the reaſon of every thing: he only propoſes to give us certain and convincing tokens that it is him who ſpeaks to us, in order to procure, by means of ſuch miracles and proofs as we may not reject, a deciſive influence to what he ſays, and to thoſe whom he ſends to us. But he afterwards and reaſonably requires

quires we ſhould believe without heſitation the things which he declares to us; eſpecially when we find no other motive for rejecting them, but that we cannot of ourſelves be certain whether they are or are not ſuch as they are repreſented.

§. XIV. Where are thoſe *ſubtilties*, with which Rouſſeau reproaches us?—Was there ever any thing more ſimple, and more within the reach of every underſtanding, than the manner in which our Religion inculcates the ſublimeſt truths? GOD ſpeaks: the miracles he performs clearly prove his identity; and the ignorant as well as the learned have nothing more to do than to believe what he hath told them, with an humble docility: this is briefly the ſum of our religion; was there ever a more ſhort or more eaſy method?—Faith is ſo analogous to the moſt ſimple, that ſimplicity itſelf conſtitutes the faireſt part of her character. GOD does not call us to eternal life by means of ſubtle and difficult propoſitions, but through faith, which opens to all a ready and an eaſy entrance *. The ſimplicity of faith.

* *In ſimplicitate fides eſt, in fide juſtitia eſt, in confeſſione pietas eſt. Non per difficiles nos Deus ad beatam vitam queſtiones vocat — in abſoluto nobis, ac facili eſt æternitas.* S. Hilar. lib. ii. de Trinit.

To

To *believe* is an act suited to every state and condition of life: but *to reason*, suits but with a few persons. If then through the means of reason, as Rousseau suggests, GOD should call mankind to the inheritance of his promises; the simple in that case would undoubtedly have cause to complain; and might say to GOD; "In vain, O Lord, "hast thou promised us the kingdom of "heaven: It cannot suit our narrow un- "derstandings; and it requires too much "ingenuity and skill in argument for us "ever to be able to attain it."

We apprehend, that what we have hitherto said has sufficiently shewn his continual deficiencies in sound argument, who ventures to compare his blind and feeble reason, with that of the Almighty: "Indeed, we rea- "dily repeat after the celebrated Paschal, it is "glorious for religion, to have men so un- "reasonable for it's enemies. Their oppo- "sitions, are attended with so little hazard "to that religion, that they only serve, "on the contrary, to establish the principal truths

" truths it teaches. For the chriſtian faith " eſtabliſhes theſe two things chiefly, *The* " *corruption of nature*, and *the Redemp-* " *tion by* JESUS CHRIST: Now, if theſe " men do not ſerve to evidence the truth " of the Redemption by the ſanctity of their " manners, they ſerve at leaſt admirably to " demonſtrate the corruption of nature by " ſentiments ſo unnatural as thoſe they " are hardy enough to advance. "

§. XV. We have already ſhewn how juſt and reaſonable it was to ſubmit to the authority of the miracles wrought by the apoſtles: we have ſeen that, to ſubmit ourſelves to them, it was ſufficient to conſult the natural idea engraven upon the hearts of all men, and then to be faithful, and act conſiſtently with that idea. This was what the Pagans did, and it made Chriſtians of them. We will take notice in the ſequel, what force the *prophecies* added to a proof already ſo incontrovertible.

Reaſon leads to a belief in miracles.

Does it become Rouſſeau to ſay, " now " what is to be done in this caſe? There is " but one ſtep to be taken; namely, to " recur

" recur to reaſon, and leave miracles to " themſelves ? " — Does not reaſon itſelf lead us to ſubmit to the authority of miracles ? Does it not ſuggeſt to us, that they are the voice of GOD ; the language which he makes uſe of to ſignify his beheſts to mankind, and which cannot be rejected, without combating the Deity himſelf ?—Are not miracles an infinitely ſurer method of information, than any arguments whatever, which often by their illuſions and ſpecious appearances, deceive and lead us wrong ? But true miracles, as we have demonſtrated, being the teſtimony of GOD himſelf ; the credentials which he gives his meſſengers ; and GOD being unable to deceive us, his miracles, therefore, cannot lead us into error.

Rouſſeau informs us, " that we ſhould " always conduct ourſelves, and be de- " termined, by the *cleareſt intelligence.* " Now the intelligence which miracles communicate is ſuperior to that of reaſon, ſince it is divine. It is conſiſtent therefore with reaſon to diveſt itſelf of all arguments, and to ſubmit to the authority of miracles. This is that trueſt good ſenſe, which the infidel

infidel does but obſcure and perplex, by vain ſophiſtry, and ſubtle diſtinctions: It is only (as we ſhall proceed to ſhew) by obſerving the natural intelligence of ſenſe, that Rouſſeau can poſſibly perſuade mankind, *that it would be better never to have recourſe to miracles.*

Inſtead of wandering into a courſe of vain argumentation, inſtead of giving ourſelves up to the guidance of a reaſon which ſo often impoſes upon us; the matter in queſtion here is only to examine into certain facts, upon which all men have infallible principles, to enable them to judge. The proof of miracles comes into this order of facts, and therefore is capable of certainty and full evidence. Reaſon and good ſenſe impel us to give our aſſent to them; and this proof ſo well confirms itſelf, that it muſt be ſufficient to convince every reaſonable mind, and make the unbeliever ſenſible, that all his arguments have hitherto deceived him, though he could not diſcover their deficiency.

While

While Rouſſeau only ſeeks to put every thing in diſorder by his frivolous diſtinctions, let him alone bear the blame of them: But he pretends moreover to lay them to the charge of Chriſtianity. He has ſaid that to leave miracles, in order to recur to reaſon, is conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt good ſenſe, which could not be obſcured but by the power of ſubtle diſtinctions. He afterwards exclaims, " what do I talk of — ſubtle *diſtinctions* " *in chriſtianity!* If there are any ſuch, " JESUS CHRIST was in the wrong " ſurely to promiſe the kingdom of hea- " ven to the weak and ſimple. How came " he to begin his fineſt diſcourſe with " bleſſing the *poor in ſpirit*, if it requires " ſo much ingenuity to comprehend and " believe his doctrines? When you have " proved that I ought to ſubmit my rea- " ſon to his dictates, I ſhall grant it is " all very well: but in order to prove " that, you muſt render them intelligible " to my underſtanding: you muſt adapt " your arguments to the capacity of one " *poor in ſpirit*; or I ſhall no longer ac- " knowledge you to be the true diſciple of

" your

" your maſter, or think it his doctrine which " you would inculcate. " The cunning malice of Rouſſeau is here very evident. He endeavours to make JESUS CHRIST contradict himſelf, as having promiſed that to the ſimple, which the means, he affords them, cannot enable them to procure.

Now it is preciſely becauſe there is no ſubtilty in chriſtianity, and that the ſimple ſhould enjoy a portion of the promiſes made by JESUS CHRIST, that it becomes neceſſary, for them to leave reaſon to itſelf, and recur to miracles. By this method GOD truly places himſelf within the comprehenſion of every underſtanding, adapts his arguments to the capacity of the poor in ſpirit, and acquits himſelf of the promiſes he hath made them. The ſimple one, the poor in ſpirit, is, by theſe means, put upon a level with the learned and ingenious man. The Chriſtian Religion being eſtabliſhed upon ſenſible and palpable proofs, every one is able without pains or labour to recognize it by thoſe illuſtrious features, which characteriſe it. Such an

examination requires only an heart which ſearches after truth with ſincerity. But how could JESUS have promiſed the kingdom of heaven to the ſimple, if it became neceſſary for them to relinquiſh miracles, and return to reaſon? The ſimple would then have had cauſe to ſay to him, "bring "your doctrines down to my comprehen- "ſion: adapt your arguments to the capa- "city of one, who is poor in ſpirit. You "would have me to examine your doc- "trine by the aids of reaſon. Is this that "ready and eaſy way, by which you have "promiſed to lead me to ſalvation?" Here the Chriſtian Religion ſhines, with a peculiar luſtre: it is here that ſhe excites admiration at the wiſdom of her œconomy; and her juſt correſpondence to our nature, by confounding the temerity of the unbeliever.

The Chriſtian Religion ſhould be common and level to every mind, none ought to be excluded from it's regard. That Religion which propoſes ſuch means, as can at beſt ſuit but a few, cannot be the true Religion; it is unworthy of GOD, becauſe

it

it bears not the character of goodneſs and wiſdom: now a Religion founded merely on reaſon, and requiring long diſcuſſions, could not be comprehended by the ignorant and the ſimple.

What reſources indeed could theſe ſimple and ignorant ones apply to, if they had no other guide than reaſon to conduct them to ſalvation? could they find within themſelves, wherewith to elevate and raiſe their minds to the contemplation of divine truths? Could they, alone, open to themſelves a path whereby to march ſecurely in ſo difficult and toilſome a courſe? What is to become of the artificer, who beholds only the work of his own hands: of the labourer, who can hardly read: of the ſick man, whom the burden of his diſeaſe renders unable to meditate, reflect, and examine? What ſhall become of ſo many men whom the diſtraction of a thouſand worldly avocations, and neceſſities, almoſt wholly occupies? How could theſe find the neceſſary time for diſcuſſing all the points of Religion? Of what reaſoning, will thoſe many narrow and limited minds be capable,

who can ſcarcely apprehend the moſt eaſy things? If the reaſon of every individual muſt be the ſole judge in matters of Religion, well might a man exclaim: "adieu "to trades, to arts, to human ſciences, and "every civil occupation. There can no "longer be any other ſtudy than that of "religion. Even he who ſhall have en- "joyed the moſt robuſt health, beſt em- "ployed his time, made the utmoſt uſe "of his reaſon, and lived the longeſt, will "not without great difficulty be able, in his "old age, to know on what concluſion to "fix his mind: and it will be a great "point gained, if he learns before his death, "in what mode of worſhip he ought to "have lived."

What ſhall we do then with all thoſe children of ſimplicity, with thoſe many perſons, who are utterly incapable of ſtudy, or the making of deep reſearches? Have not they as much right to the benefits of religion, as the learned and the ingenious? Muſt they be excluded from them, becauſe they are born, with leſs ſtrength of underſtanding, becauſe they are leſs penetrating,

and

deprived of the neceſſary means of cultivation? Muſt they be abandoned to their ignorance and incapacity? Would it not be well worthy of the goodneſs of GOD, to recompence them, by furniſhing them with means proper to ſupply their feebleneſs and inability? But what is now to become of them? Shall it be to rely on that held forth by the reaſon of others, which their own doth not afford them? If ſuch is the method adopted by providence with regard to the ignorant; reaſon from thenceforth finds herſelf brought round to authority, and after having rejected an authority ſo lawful as that of revelation, ſo well founded, and ſo proportionate to every capacity; the authority of ſome particular tutors will be ſubſtituted in it's ſtead: Tutors who like Rouſſeau, with reſpect to his Emilius, will fancy themſelves in the right to ſubject the reaſon of their pupils to their own; a reſource more fatal and dangerous, than the evil it would remedy: by means whereof the weak and ſimple would quickly become the helpleſs victims of a foreign and vainglorious reaſon: and, being forced to give themſelves blindly up to the faint glimmer-

ings of a reaſon ſo often falſe and deceitful, into how many deviations and errors would they not be precipitated? Incapable of diſcerning by themſelves truth from falſhood, they could only form their judgment on that of others, with equal indiſcrimination adopting error and truth; and, in a word, becoming the perpetual ſport of the inconſtancy and levity of human reaſon.

Amidſt the chaos and confuſion of ſo many ideas and opinions, thus various and incompatible, how could they even determine to believe any thing? Not being in a condition to weigh and judge of the ſolidity of thoſe reaſons, which ſupport every different opinion; how, or why ſhould they rather embrace one than another? Would they not be in the right to diſtruſt all alike? The beſt uſe then which they could make of their reaſon, would be, to believe nothing; but to reſt in a horrid uncertainty upon the moſt eſſential and important points.

Behold, whither the fearful temerity of the unbeliever neceſſarily tends! — the wretched condition to which it reduces three-fourths

three-fourths of mankind; into what exceſs, were it to be followed, would it not conduct even thoſe who moſt highly vaunt of their reaſon and underſtanding! how blind would they be, who ſhould imagine, with Rouſſeau, that reaſon alone is ſufficient to enable them to penetrate into, and to comprehend, the ſublimeſt objects to which man is appointed: whatever the greatneſs and elevation of their minds may be, unleſs the deity aid and enlighten them; they will never do other than grovel. *Cujuſmodi libet excellant ingenio, niſi Deus adſit humi repunt. St. Auguſt.* We have already ſhewn this, from the experience of four thouſand years paſt in wandering and error, which methinks ſhould convince man of the inſufficiency of his reaſon. In what light, ought we then to look upon the infidel who would ſtill bring us back to the guidance of reaſon? His fair promiſes may flatter our pride; but woe be to thoſe, who, without knowing their infirmity, and without conſulting their weakneſs; fooliſhly give themſelves up to the ſpeeches of ſuch deceitful guides. They offer us a remedy for our evils, a deadly poiſon,

poiſon, which is only calculated to augment them, and render them almoſt incurable.

But what wiſdom doth the Chriſtian Religion diſplay, in oppoſition to the folly of infidelity! what an admirable proportion in all it's parts, to the condition and neceſſities of all it's followers in general, and of every one in particular! It excludes no one: but affords to all a ſhort and eaſy path, whereby to attain an entire knowledge of the truths which it profeſſes. In concert with it's Lord and Maſter JESUS CHRIST, it calls the young as well as the old; neither excepting artiſans or labourers; all who deſire to quench their thirſt at the fountain of ſalvation; how ignorant ſoever they may be; however occupied in the buſineſſes of life; however weak or infirm, through age, or ſex, or maladies — All, without exception, are received and admitted into it's boſom! It procures for all the means ſufficient to their inſtruction in the great truths of ſalvation, in which reſpect it knows no diſtinction between the noble and mean man, the poor and the rich, the ſimple and the learned: "*Come unto me*, ſays CHRIST it's divine "chief, *Come unto me, all ye who are weary*

"*and*

" *and heavy laden : come, all ye who thirſt* " *after righteouſneſs, and I will allay your* " *thirſt.*" And behold how JESUS CHRIST executeth this great promiſe !

§. XVI. There is nothing more proper to attract the regard of mankind, than the authority and power of miracles: of this we have already given convincing proofs. There is nothing alſo more within the reach of the ſimple, and leaſt intelligent capacities, than that which falls under cognizance of the ſenſes, and which needs no other than this plain examination, in order to be believed : — thoſe miracles which have the benefit and comfort of their ſpectators for their object, are ſtill more fitly adapted to gain their minds and hearts. From admiration they proceed to acknowledgment ; and from grateful acknowledgment to the tendereſt and moſt lively affection. Upon principles thus natural, doth JESUS CHRIST regulate his conduct. No ſooner doth he begin to manifeſt himſelf to mankind, than he fills every place through which he paſſes with marks of his power and benevolence ; every day works new miracles, and performs new cures, each more aſtoniſhing than the other.

Miracles moſt proper.

other. Thus eternal Wiſdom drew to it wandering ſouls, in order to enlighten and to teach them; and in conſequence of it's attraction, the crowding multitude flock together: but the moment for fixing conſtantly their hearts was not yet come; it was previouſly neceſſary that the Saviour of the world ſhould be raiſed upon the croſs.

After his reſurrection he ſends his apoſtles throughout the whole world; they repeat all the miracles of their Maſter, and confirm whatever they ſay by the authority of ſimilar prodigies; what they are ſeen to perform, is a ſure warrant of what they declare, concerning the actions, doctrines, and perſon of JESUS CHRIST.

They are every where heard with attention; they are followed from all parts; and the religion, faith, and tenets, which they preach, are every where embraced.

By ſuch means as theſe did JESUS CHRIST build up his church. The miracles of every kind which he and his apoſtles wrought, gained him all neceſſary authority; this authority, thus confirmed, deſerved from every one a full belief of whatever he had ſaid, or

ſhould

ſhould advance. This faith has aſſembled, and united, in one religious body, a multitude of people; by means of this multitude he hath procured to his religion an antiquity and force which render it ſuperior and invincible to all the darts of error and infidelity; — by this numerous and reſpectable aſſembly, he hath provided his church with the moſt eminent authority in the world; an authority which includes all human ſanction, with the divine. The influence, the extent, perpetuity and ſplendor of ſo great a ſociety, enſures to it every deſireable human authority. The promiſes made by JESUS CHRIST in it's favour, which are founded upon the miracles wrought in confirmation of it, eſtabliſh the divine authority it hath derived. By the *firſt* authority, it warrants to us the certainty of all thoſe facts, which conſtitute it's *divine* authority; and all theſe facts, in their turn, warrant to us the truth of that infallible authority, which is promiſed to and aſſumed by it.

JESUS CHRIST hath moreover furniſhed his church with abundance of proofs, and prevailing arguments, by means of the miniſtry of thoſe many celebrated men, whom it

it hath received into it's boſom, diſtinguiſhed for their learning and piety. Thus the higheſt authority, and every proof, derivative from reaſon, are united in this ſociety, for the enlightening and directing of mankind. In this fortreſs of truth, this citadel of authority, the ſimple are ſafe. In this aſylum, the weak and humble are ſheltered and fortified, as in a neſt, before their wings are grown whereon to elevate their ſouls to the knowledge of the myſtery of faith. After they have found a refuge there, all the powers of reaſon are employed in their defence, againſt ſuch men as have the temerity to arraign their conduct, and to decry it as contrary to the light of reaſon.

Was ever any thing better proportioned to every mind than ſuch a method? It delivers them from thoſe long diſcuſſions, and that toilſome labour, of which they would otherwiſe have ſtood in need; but of which, nevertheleſs, hardly any one is capable. It ſupplies the weakneſs of our underſtandings, and prevents their errors; by furniſhing us with a ſure light for our guidance amidſt our natural obſcurity. This is the ſhorteſt path, but it includes all others. Without this

this aſſiſtance mankind would never have been able to attain the knowledge of heavenly truths: without this firm and ſolid rule of gradation, they could never have been enabled to aſcend up to the Deity.

The darkneſs and inſufficiency of our reaſon, therefore, neceſſarily leads us into the way of this authority; for every man, who cannot of himſelf comprehend, and know the truths eſſential for him to underſtand, ought, by all means, to have recourſe to an authority which may ſupply his natural impotence. In this ſituation, the beſt uſe he can make of his reaſon is, evidently, to ſubmit it to the higheſt authority in the world, and which hath every mark of divine aſſiſtance and protection. Can any thing be more wiſe and prudent than ſuch a conduct? It is conſiſtent with the light which reaſon affords; ſince it only ſubmits that reaſon to a teſtimony which poſſeſſeth every character of truth, capable of deſerving an entire confidence.

At the ſame time nothing is more properly adapted to intitle it to this confidence, and to influence all hearts in it's favour, than the

the manner wherein it propoſes to inſtruct thoſe who addreſs themſelves to it's protection. All other perſuaſions raiſe a great clamour about reaſon, and promiſe every thing from it's aſſiſtance; yet they only lead into inextricable difficulties and doubts. But this ſociety, on the contrary, doth not pretend to deliver men from their darkneſs and errors, by preſcribing to them a philoſophical diſquiſition of the truths which it recommends: it only requires faith in truths which it commands to be believed, after having itſelf received and adopted them: thus, for the inſtruction of it's members, it exerciſes an everliving teſtimony, which prevents their deviation into vain arguments, and is alone capable of uniting them rationally to the ſame religious body. In this ſituation, the ignorant are content to know thoſe truths which the church preſents to them as ſuch, and to be brought up in the faith of them. Thoſe to whom GOD hath imparted more underſtanding, and better means of intelligence, apply themſelves to the meditation of thoſe truths, without departing from a juſt ſubmiſſion, which ſerves them as a guide and lanthern, in their inquiry. This ſtudy renders them more and more ſenſible of the neceſſity

neceſſity of that path they have taken. Their humble deference is rewarded with an increaſe of light, which changes their feeble intelligence, and docible ſubmiſſion, into perfect knowledge.

§. XVII. It may be proper to obſerve, how Rouſſeau, ever inconſiſtent, eſtabliſhes the neceſſity of ſome authority to regulate the conduct of mankind in matters of religion. We ſhall be aſtoniſhed at the prodigious contradictions to which the ſpirit of caprice leads, and conſtrains him. He declares in various places, that he would gladly ſet all authority aſide, and he uſed every effort to combat and overthrow it.

Of authority, and of that of the church in particular.

Firſt, let us hear how he declaims againſt it in p. 139. of his third volume: "Would "we ſeek the truth, therefore, ſays he, in "ſincerity, we muſt lay no ſtreſs on the "place or circumſtance of our birth, nor "on the authority of fathers and teachers; "but appeal to the dictates of reaſon and "conſcience, concerning every thing that "is taught us in our youth. It is to no "purpoſe to bid me ſubject my reaſon to "the truth of things, of which it is inca-

"pacitated

" pacitated to judge; the man who would " impoſe upon me a falſhood may bid me " do the ſame. It is neceſſary, therefore, I " ſhould employ my reaſon, even to know " when I ought to ſubmit."

No one can ſhew a more expreſs contempt of authority, or more openly diſſuade men from paying any regard to it. But behold the propoſition reverſed!

"As the conduct of a woman, ſays Rouſſeau " (vol. vi. p. 77, 78.) is ſubſervient to the pub- " lic opinion, her faith in matters of religion " ſhould, for that very reaſon, be ſubject " to authority. Every daughter ought to " be of the ſame religion as her mother; " and every wife to be of the religion of her " huſband. For though ſuch religion ſhould " be falſe, that docility which induces the " mother and daughter to ſubmit to the or- " der of nature, takes away, in the ſight of " GOD, the criminality of their error. As " they are not in a capacity to judge for " themſelves, they ought to abide by the " deciſion of their fathers and huſbands, as " confidently as by that of the church. — " As authority ought to regulate the reli-

" gion

" gion of women, it is not ſo needful to
" explain to them the reaſons for their be-
" lief, as to lay down preciſely the tenets
" they are to believe."

Surely no body can more flatly contradict himſelf than Rouſſeau, in theſe two paſſages. In the former of which, every kind of authority is rejected, and all religion is reſolved into reaſon. In the ſecond, on the contrary, he calls back to authority all thoſe who are not in a capacity of judging for themſelves in matters of religion: Without doubt he had perceived how abſurd it was in him to think of leading all mankind to religion, by the way of reaſon. He cannot, however, ſubmit thoſe to authority, who are incapable of judging for themſelves of religious matters; but he muſt ſubmit, at the ſame time, every man to that authority: For the learned, and perſons capable of reaſoning, paſs through the condition of ignorant perſons; and before their arrival at that ſtate, wherein they acquired inſtruction and knowledge, a long interval elapſed, during which they could not judge for themſelves. It is neceſſary, therefore, for them to be ſubjected at that period

to authority; and when they attained an age wherein they were capable of judging and examining; the ſame method of authority was no leſs neceſſary for them, becauſe no man can, of himſelf, judge with certainty, of the points of religion.

We have before ſufficiently demonſtrated, as well from experience, as from the acknowledgments of Rouſſeau, that the human mind, left to itſelf, is but an aſſemblage of uncertainties, obſcurity, and contradictions; that the method of reference to authority, is the only one proportioned to the condition of mankind in every reſpect, as it ſupplies the weakneſs of the ſimple, by preventing their being deſpondent, under inability; and as it prevents thoſe who fancy themſelves ſtrong, and capable of walking by themſelves, from becoming a fatal example to others, and from prejudicing themſelves by an audacious preſumption. *Ut neque ille deſperatione frangatur, neque iſte precipitetur audaciâ.* Auguſt.

From whence has Rouſſeau gathered, *That every daughter ought to be of the religion of her mother, and every wife of that of her*

her huſband? On what grounds does he venture to aſſure us, *That though ſuch religion ſhould prove falſe, the docility which induces the mother to ſubmit to the pretended order of nature, takes away in the ſight of* GOD, *the ſinfulneſs of their error?* Where is *this order of nature*, which requires the daughter to ſubmit to the religion of her mother, and the wife to that of her huſband? Is this order of nature, then, contrary to another order of nature? Now there is an order of nature, as we ſhall prove to Rouſſeau, which commands us to follow the true religion, and to ſubmit ourſelves to that alone. It is an order of nature never to conſent or acquieſce in an error or falſhood, and to worſhip GOD only in truth. Nature teaches us that falſhood cannot pleaſe GOD, and that he being eſſential truth, we cannot honour him ſo much as by adhering to the truth.

But Rouſſeau, in his uſual manner, endeavours to confound every thing; and becauſe, by the law of nature, a daughter ſhould be ſubmiſſive to her mother, and a wife to her huſband, in whatever relates to *domeſtic* affairs; and even in whatſoever is not repugnant to the law of GOD: There-

fore he concludes, that this ſubmiſſion ſhould alſo extend itſelf to matters of a *religious* nature. But, is it not, above all, a fixed order of nature, that every one ſhould be ſubject to GOD, and his laws? From this firſt order all others are derived, and all are ſubordinate to it. If then a father, or a huſband, require things which are contrary to what GOD injoins and preſcribes us, will it be to follow the order of nature to obey them? — Will it be piety and religion, to make the Deity ſubſervient to man; to offer up that obedience which is his due, to the ideas and caprice of thoſe who may have authority over us? To what impiety, to what an height of *profligacy* might not ſuch a kind of religion introduce mankind? Idolatry, and the moſt abominable modes of worſhip, would be the natural conſequences of ſuch a conduct. Every thing would be put into the moſt horrible confuſion; and the world would be filled with as many different religions, as there ſhould be families, principals, or maſters. Such are the very fooliſh and impious means to which the infidel is obliged to have recourſe, in order to combat the true religion; means which we ſhall take

take occaſion to refute more fully in the ſequel of theſe diſſertations. And now let us aſk our reader's opinion, whether it might not be better for Rouſſeau, to ſleep wholly at his eaſe, than thus to wake himſelf, only to utter ſuch ſenſeleſs and incongruous dreams?—

Let us here, for a moment, conſider Rouſſeau's weak and whimſical ſelf-contradiction. At firſt, the man will admit of no authority at all; but uſes every effort to reduce all religion into argumentation; and employs every poſſible artifice to deſtroy, as far as in him lies, the authority of faith; and yet, preſently after, this very perſon, carrying on his abſurdity even to the admitting the authority of all religions; and pretending that "we muſt reſpect them all as ſo "many ſalutary inſtitutions, which, in every "country, preſcribe an uniform manner of "honouring GOD, by a public worſhip *:" Adds, "I believe them all good:—I con-"ceive, that to ſolicit any one to quit the "religion he is brought up in, is to ſolicit "him to do wrong, and is of conſequence "to do wrong one's ſelf; let us therefore

* See vol. iii. p. 184.

" preſerve the public peace, and wait the " progreſs of further information. The " laws in every country ſhould be reſpect- " ed. We ſhould never diſturb the eſta- " bliſhed worſhip, nor excite the people to " diſobedience. For we know not abſo- " lutely whether it be better for them to " change their preſent opinions for others; " and we do know of a certainty that it is " an evil to tranſgreſs the laws."

Had Rouſſeau, in the leaſt degree, followed theſe rules and principles, what could have cauſed him to inveigh ſo furiouſly and daringly againſt thoſe *inſtitutions* of the Chriſtian Religion, which alone are truly *ſalutary?* We have already remarked, that no body, in the common method of proceeding, endeavours to deſtroy the lawful authority of the Chriſtian Religion, but to ſubſtitute others in it's ſtead, as falſe as extravagant. In the preſent inſtance Rouſſeau ſupplies us with a deplorable example of this truth; whom folly and impiety excite to pay a deference, even to the moſt monſtrous and unworthy modes of human worſhip; while he teſtifies nothing but horror and contempt for

for the reſpectable authority of the Chriſtian Church and Religion! Fatal, though juſt blindneſs, of a mind which refuſes the conviction ſurrounding him on every ſide! Terrible, but ſalutary example of the perils thoſe men ſubject themſelves to, and the errors into which they fall, who will needs conduct themſelves by the ſole light of reaſon!

We, who adhere to the doctrines of the church, do not, with the infidels, conſider that church, primarily, as a divine ſociety which GOD hath eſtabliſhed to decide the matters of religion; we look upon it only as a capital human ſociety, which hath long ſubſiſted without interruption: This ſociety, thus ancient and extenſive, and thus well inſtructed in thoſe matters which reſpect it, we call upon in teſtimony of the facts which fall under it's cognizance, and of the titles and records which eſtabliſh it, and form it's conſtitution.

Thus, ſimply conſidered, the church hath no ſupernatural privilege; it hath that authority only which all private perſons have to aſcertain the truth of things which have occurred

occurred amongſt them, and the memory of which has, from age to age, been preſerved down to the preſent times. In this manner the church, ſubſiſting from the time of the apoſtles, atteſts that the ſcriptures, whoſe repoſitary it is, are as ancient as itſelf. It aſſures us that theſe books have really for their authors thoſe perſons whoſe names they bear; that theſe authors either ſaw the things they have related, or were perfectly well informed of them by eye witneſſes; that whatever they have written is moſt minutely juſt; that theſe authors were known, not only as contemporary with the facts they relate, but alſo that their ſanctity, as men, and the innumerable miracles which they wrought, ſheltered their teſtimony from the leaſt ſhadow of ſuſpicion, and rendered them perfectly worthy of credit.

This ſociety teaches us, that being formed, and in full force, at the time when theſe books were compoſed; it hath found, and acknowledged in them only that which it had before believed; only thoſe facts of which it was before well appriſed and perſuaded.

The

The teſtimony of this ſociety thus propoſed, has ſtill nothing in it extraordinary or divine; it depends only on the truth and certainty of books, and facts, reſpecting the Chriſtian Religion. But yet, ſuch a teſtimony is ſuperior to whatever can be found of the kind, in the natural courſe of things: It is a teſtimony given by an united people perfectly inſtructed from the firſt inſtitution both in it's origin, and the manner wherein it was formed; and a people, which hath always zealouſly preſerved it's primitive rights, nor ever, at any time, ſuffered the leaſt alteration or change in them; which, from it's firſt conſtitution, hath teſtified itſelf deſirous that, as well in private as in common, their evidence ſhould be read and explained, and faithful copies of it preſerved. Upon the foundation of ſuch an aſſent, thus ancient and uniform, thus noble and univerſal, we believe, and we advance, that the truth of the ſcriptures, and of the facts they contain, ought to be believed.

This is that unanimous conſent which formerly determined Saint Auguſtin to believe

lieve the truth of our books, and to quit the ſect of the Manichees, in order to ſubmit to the authority of the Catholic church. "I ſubmitted myſelf, ſaid that famous man, "only to an opinion, confirmed by the "ſtrenuouſly-borne teſtimony of nations "and people, who, from all parts, have "entered into the pale of the Catholic "church: I gave my faith up only to a "conſent ſo ancient and univerſal, ſo aſto-"niſhing and uniform: *Hoc ergo credidi*, "*famæ celebritate, conſenſione, vetuſtate Ro-*"*boratæ*." This is exactly the manner in which we conſider the Catholic church, when engaged in controverſy with infidels: This is the teſtimony of the people, and nothing more: But it is ſuch a teſtimony, as, though of a natural kind, is ſufficient to warrant to us the truth of the hiſtory of our books, and the facts which they relate.

Why Chriſt's miracles were rejected.

§. XVIII. After this digreſſion, not wholly from the purpoſe, we return to the ſubject of miracles. Now, we have already replied to the text in Deuteronomy which Rouſſeau cited, in juſtification of his aſſertion of the dubious nature of miracles, and their

their author (whether it be the Deity, or the Devil); and have ſhewn, that the paſſage he produces has no reference to *true miracles*. How, indeed, could ſcripture ſuppoſe that a prophet, intereſted in the ſervice of falſe gods, could perform *true* miracles to intice the people to idolatry: That ſame ſcripture, which, in an hundred different places, defies every falſe god to work any ſuch; and which ſo frequently aſſures them, that their divinity ſhall be acknowledged, if they will but ſhew forth a power ſufficient for the working of true miracles?—

If, amongſt the Jews, their phariſees and doctors attribute to the devil thoſe miracles which our Saviour wrought in the very midſt of them (though, by the way, even they never dared to aſſert that GOD performs miracles, either to tempt mankind, or to try their fidelity) — who does not perceive that perverſe ignorance, pride, paſſion, revenge, and malice, are the principal inducement to ſo very poor an evaſion? — The common people, more honeſt and ſincere, do not heſitate to admire the miracles of our Saviour, and

and in them gratefully to acknowledge the omnipotence of GOD: And had they not been, at length, deceived and seduced from that conviction by their elders, they would have been constantly attached to those miracles. The pharisees and the lawyers, the sole authors of all their misfortunes, clearly shew throughout the whole of their conduct, that the love of truth had no influence in their decision. At first they are divided amongst themselves; some of them cannot suffer that these miracles of JESUS CHRIST should be attributed to the devil. "*What!* say they, *Can a devil open the eyes* "*of the blind?* John x. 21. Others said, "*How can a wicked man*, an impostor, *do* "*such miracles? — and there was a division* "*among them.*" In short, though they did, at length, consent to reject the miracles of CHRIST, yet it is clear they only effect their purpose by sacrificing their best understanding to the base views of envy and interest. "*What are we doing?* they cry, *for this* "*man worketh many miracles. If we let* "*him thus alone, all men will believe in him,* "*and the Romans will come, and destroy our* "*city and nation.*" After such a confession,

can

can any one doubt of the motives which animated and determined the judgment of theſe falſe ſages? Is it not evident that, but for their interpoſition, the whole country of Judea would have paid due homage to the divine Redeemer? They, indeed, pronounced their own condemnation, by acknowledging that the ſplendor and power of his miracles were capable of drawing the whole world to him, and of making him regarded as the MESSIAH.

§. XIX. Let us only conſider what idea the generality of mankind, in all ages, have entertained of true miracles; and we ſhall ſee that it will be impoſſible for Rouſſeau to ſupport his ſyſtem, without *rejecting that evident and univerſal conſent of all nations*, and without directly oppoſing that *amazing unanimity of mankind**, which, notwithſtanding, he looks upon as the ſureſt light, and the moſt unerring guide. No ſooner have the apoſtles opened their miſſion, than preſently the lively impreſſion made by their miracles, draws to them a multitude of diſciples: The inhabitants of *Lydda* and *Saron*, The natural and plain conſequence of miracles.

* See Emilius, vol. iii. p. 103.

at

at ſight of the cure performed upon a paralitic, inſtantly embrace the goſpel. Acts ix. 32, &c. The miracle which St. Philip performs in Samaria, ſubdues to the faith a multitude of it's inhabitants. All, with equal ardour, liſten to his diſcourſes, ſeeing the miracles which he wrought. Even Simon Magus is ſo ſtruck with theſe miracles, and ſurpriſing events, as to be quite beſide himſelf at the ſight, and to embrace the faith which they tended to inculcate. Certainly then, this magician, with the help of all the ſecrets of his art, and all the aſſiſtances of the devil, could do nothing which might be compared or came near to them, ſince he is ſeized with ſo great aſtoniſhment. The proconſul Sergius Paulus, ſmitten with admiration at the ſudden blindneſs of Elymas the ſorcerer, immediately believes in CHRIST: Paul and Barnabas, on their arrival at Lyſtra, reſtore a man who had been lame from his birth, to the free uſe of his limbs: The people, aſtoniſhed at this miracle, cry out with one voice, "Theſe are Gods, come down to us "in the likeneſs of men!" and are, that moment, for offering ſacrifices to them. Such is the ſimple and natural idea which

all

all men entertain of miracles. They are fully perſuaded, none but the true GOD can perform them: And, as the people of Lyſtra acknowledged for gods thoſe who were not, they, therefore, preſently attribute to *them* the prodigy of which they were the admiring witneſſes.

It is by virtue of miracles, and that juſt conſequence which all men have drawn from them, that the apoſtles were enabled ſo widely to extend the knowledge of the true GOD. "*Through mighty ſigns and wonders* (ſaith the apoſtle St. Paul) *given unto me to operate, and by the power of the Spirit of* GOD, *have I filled, with the knowledge of the goſpel of* CHRIST, *all that great extent of country from Jeruſalem round about unto Illyricum**." At the firſt ſight of theſe miracles, every one is perſuaded, that none but GOD can be their author, or give the power of working them to the apoſtles. Men cannot help conſidering them as a certain proof of whatever they declare, after having performed them; and are fully convinced of the truth of their doctrine, be-

* Rom. xv. 19.

cauſe

cauſe the miracles which give it ſanction, cannot poſſibly be mixed with falſhood, or wrought in confirmation of deception or error.

Had the devils, the Pagan deities, ever wrought miracles like thoſe of the apoſtles, or had any one believed them capable of performing ſuch; what would there have been ſo aſtoniſhing, or ſtriking, in thoſe which the apoſtles produced? Had it been conceived, that ſuch effects could be connected with a falſe doctrine, or could have been diſplayed, to tempt and deceive mankind; or, further, could they have been done with as prompt and ſudden a facility, as thoſe of the apoſtles demonſtrated—what impreſſion would thoſe wrought by the apoſtles have made? Would not the people have demanded a ſcrutiny of their doctrine? Would not they have inſiſted, that, every circumſtance being ſo flatly againſt what theſe new-comers advanced, and the worſhip they pretended to aboliſh, ſo ancient and inveterate; a long and mature deliberation was therefore neceſſary, previous to their giving their aſſent to their preaching?

But

But the effect was different: The apoſtles preach; and give miracles, as the proofs, warrant, and confirmation of their doctrines: From that inſtant, men no longer heſitate to yield to their perſuaſion; but, renouncing their paſſions, and their gods, ſacrifice their fortunes, and even life itſelf, to follow the doctrine which they hear: So certain it is, that mankind have ever been fully convinced, that true miracles are an evident and certain proof of the truth; that the devil cannot perform them; and that they can never be joined with falſhood.

§. XX. Let our infidels, who, in order to obſcure the light and ſplendor of the goſpel-miracles, anxiouſly ſeek in ſcenes of darkneſs, for unauthorized examples in ſupport of their error: Let ſuch, if they pleaſe, compare the pretended miracles of an Apollonius with thoſe of the apoſtles of JESUS CHRIST. Without entering into a minute diſcuſſion of the fooliſh pretences and deluſion of that impoſtor, which, however, as St. Auſtin well obſerves, have no credible author for their ſupport; Let us judge of the difference between the works of Apollonius, and thoſe of the apoſtles, by their different effects. Apollonius Tyaneus.

This philoſopher preaches at the ſame time with the apoſtles: He attacks and contradicts the myſteries which they publiſh; and ſets forth a ſyſtem of morality perfectly conformable to the inclinations of the Pagans; while, on the other hand, the apoſtles only propoſe croſſes, ſufferings, mortification, and ſelf-denial: Apollonius's doctrine offers nothing which could baffle the reaſon of the Pagans; every tenet is adapted to their ideas: The apoſtles, on the contrary, invite men to believe one GOD in three perſons: They preach a GOD crucified, to the Gentiles very fooliſhneſs: In a word, they require faith in ſeveral myſteries, which even the reaſon of the moſt enlightened minds could no way comprehend. And what is the conſequence? Apollonius is deſerted and deſpiſed, and the illuſion of his vain pretences, diſſipated by the ſplendor and power of thoſe divine miracles performed by the apoſtles. All the world follows after them, and embraces their doctrine; while Apollonius can only make ſome few diſciples, who ſcarcely ſurvive their maſter. Can any one require a more ſtriking proof of the divinity

divinity of the apoſtolic miracles, and of the falſity of thoſe of Apollonius?

All the inſtances which unbelievers may endeavour to bring on this head, will be found of the like nature with the foregoing: They are either fables, of which even the very Pagans made a ſport and mockery; or deluſive pretenſions, which bear no kind of proportion with effects truly miraculous. "They are, as Livy himſelf obſerves, facts "embelliſhed with poetical fictions, found-"ed on no credible or authentic record." Facts, contrived to impoſe upon the credulity of the ſimple and ſuperſtitious; or thoſe falſe miracles, which the ſame writer terms, *ludibria oculorum auriumque, credita pro veris*; that is, cunning tricks, which, ſpreading a groſs deluſion over the ſenſes, make men receive as truth that which hath only it's ſpecious appearance.

Marius Maximus, a very accurate author, cited by Spartian, ſpeaking of the pretended miracles aſcribed to Adrian, ſays, That they are only fictions of impoſture and falſhood; *Hæc per ſimulatione facta.* The Pagans ne-

ver ventured to assert that their Gods had cured them otherwise than by the intervention of medicine. The apostate Julian does not boast of having been cured in any other manner. *Me sæpius ægrotum sanavit Æsculapius, indicatis remediis* *. What is there marvellous or admirable in all this? Is it not thus that physicians usually perfect their cures? And can such be compared with those which JESUS CHRIST and his apostles performed? Have all the Pagan Deities together ever effected the like? The very poets were forced to acknowledge, that none of their gods could deliver even their dearest friends from the power of death, when destiny had cut the thread of their existence. All these, without reckoning those other testimonies which we might easily subjoin, if need required, invincibly demonstrate that even profane antiquity did not believe that their Dæmon-deities, had ever performed, or could perform, a true miracle.

Real miracles incontestable evidences of truth.

§. XXI. It remains for us to shew Rousseau, that those defenders of the Christian Religion, who affirmed that GOD did work miracles

* Apud S. Cyril.

in

in it's favour, never entertained a thought that he ever worked any in behalf of error, or gave power to the devil to perform the like. It would take me an ample volume, was I inclined to recite here all the teſtimonies from ancient tradition, which have conſtantly and univerſally taught, that miracles are the incommunicable appendage of truth: That truth alone can boaſt of this high prerogative: That it is an unerring mark, whereby to diſtinguiſh, and exemplify it. And that the Almighty cannot, without contradicting himſelf, give ſuch a teſtimony in favour of falſhood and deception; nor delegate a power to the devil to exhibit it, in his own behalf.

All the apologiſts for our Religion have challenged the Pagan world to offer but one true miracle againſt thoſe which they oppoſed to them. They have called upon all their gods, aſſiſted with all the helps of magic, all their inchantments, and all their myſterious juggling, to do any thing which can come up to thoſe marvellous effects which JESUS CHRIST produced without any external means or aſſiſtance, and by the ſole omnipotence of his word. "What!

" ſays Arnobius, if any one, tranſported with " anger and fury, ſhould anſwer me, ' Is ' this CHRIST whom you worſhip, GOD? ' How would you prove it?' " One can- " not, replies he, give a more deciſive an- " ſwer in this reſpect, than the works he " did; and the unheard-of miracles which " he performed." — " But, perhaps, he " goes on, the caviller will ſtill urge, ' Your ' CHRIST was only a magician; and all ' thoſe works you ſo much boaſt of, were ' only effected by the tricks of his art.' — " What do you ſay! ſenſeleſs mortals, re- " plies Arnobius, venturing to blaſpheme, " what you cannot underſtand! Were all " theſe works, and miracles, the mere illu- " ſions of devils, and the ſleights of magic? " — Can you name one of all the magi- " cians who ever exiſted, that has, in the " leaſt degree, done what JESUS CHRIST " did? Can you, ye incredulous ſouls, har- " dened and inflexible, can ye produce me " a ſingle man, to whom even Jupiter him- " ſelf hath communicated the power — I " do not ſay — of raiſing the dead, of giv- " ing ſight to the blind, or of reſtoring " broken or palſied limbs; but — of cur-

" ing

" ing only a ſmall puſtule, or riſing in the " ſkin, by employing his word, or ſingle " touch alone ? "

Our apologiſts have gone much farther than this. They have aſſured the Pagans, that they would conſent to acknowledge their deities as true gods, in caſe they could prove that thoſe deities had ever given ſight to the blind, cauſed the cripple to walk, or raiſed the dead, or done any thing like it. " If the ſon of Coronis, ſays " St. Cyril to Julian, has done any thing " divine ; if he has given ſight to the blind, " or life to the dead, or feet to the lame, " we juſtly ought to add ourſelves to the " number of his votaries." How neceſſary was it then, for our apologiſts to be well perſuaded that dæmons could never work a true miracle ; and that GOD could ſtill leſs perform ſuch, in their favour, before they ventured to offer the heathens ſo bold a defiance? And how unavoidable is the concluſion againſt the latter, that they were perfectly conſcious of their impotence, never to have ventured to accept their challenge !

The Jews of Antioch, in order to draw Chriſtians into their ſynagogues, boaſted themſelves of the power to work miraculous cures. St. Chryſoſtom was very deſirous, if poſſible, to guard his people againſt all ſuch ſnares and deceptions; and accordingly he demonſtrated to them, in ſeveral diſcourſes, that the Jewiſh ſynagogues were no more than ſo many houſes of Satan, who had no power to cure diſeaſes: "They may "ſpread their ſnares, ſays that pious teacher, "and they may do us a miſchief, but they "can never cure us." *Dæmones inſidiari ſciunt, ac nocere, non mederi.* After having given ſeveral proofs of which, he concludes, that, whatever the Jews reported on that head, were only idle tales and fables: *Ridiculæ hæc, et fabulæ.*

The ſame father elſewhere ſets forth the objection ſtarted by Rouſſeau, in it's full extent. "How, ſays he, was that "word which the apoſtles preached, con-"firmed? Who will aſſure us, that we are "not impoſed on by them? This objection, "ſays Chryſoſtom, is deſtroyed by the teſti-

"mony

" mony which the Deity hath borne to their " miſſion ; by the ſigns and wonders he has " wrought in their favour : For, had they " deceived us in what they have related, " GOD would certainly never have borne " witneſs to their conduct by ſigns and won- " ders *." So that we have not raſhly and wantonly believed what they ſaid, but the miracles which they did, were the authority for our determination. We have not given credit to *men*, but to GOD himſelf, who has become a pledge of the truth of their doctrine: *Non illis credimus, ſed Deo.*

It might, moreover, be objected to this pious doctor, that, though GOD cannot work true miracles in favour of an impoſtor, or to give countenance to a falſe doctrine, yet the devil can, at leaſt, perform ſuch for that purpoſe ; and, conſequently, that, though poſſeſſed of the beſt atteſted miracles, we are no farther advanced than we were before. St. Chryſoſtom, anticipating the objection, clearly proves, that, whatever devils may do, cannot be compared with true miracles; whatever they produce teſtifying only

* Chryſt in Heb. c. ii Hom. 3.

weakneſs

weakneſs and impotence, ever fruitleſs and infirm. *Illa enim non ſunt virtus et potentia, ſed imbecilitas, ſed phantaſia et res vacuæ ac inanes.* Could this great ſcholar more minutely inform us, that GOD cannot work miracles to authorize error? That he cannot have joined true ones with falſhood for that purpoſe: And that the devil never could perform them?

Such has been the doctrine of our forefathers in all ages. If the limits of this work would permit, we could here draw out a continued tradition of their teſtimonies; but our reader will ſee we ſhould in ſo doing wander wide of our ſubject. It is a truth ſo firmly eſtabliſhed in the Chriſtian church, that a work or a doctrine proved by miracles, has need of no other evidence in order to it's being received, becauſe, for that reaſon, it muſt neceſſarily be true, and ſent from GOD. And, in every age, and in every conflict which religion hath ſuſtained, men have always appealed to the deciſion of miracles, and always regarded them as the moſt deciſive and convincing proof.

We

We obſerved, in a former page, that the prophet Elijah offered to the prophets of Baal this method of determining the diſpute between them. They had the boldneſs to accept the offer. But all their efforts, their repeated exclamations, their inciſions, and all their ſolicitations, could avail nothing: Their god was too impotent to aſſiſt them; and the GOD of Elijah was too true, and too jealous of his glory, to communicate that glory to impoſtors, under pretence of tempting his followers, and trying their fidelity. Elijah alone obtained the miracle he required. Truth triumphed, and falſhood and it's adherents were confounded. A memorable inſtance of what hath happened in every age.

Scarcely was JESUS CHRIST put to death; ſcarcely was he riſen again, and ſcarcely had the apoſtles received the Holy Ghoſt, when the Jews became ſtripped of every token of divinity which their religion formerly bore: All was transferred to the Chriſtian Religion, as the only true one: true miracles are no longer to be ſeen amongſt

amongſt them; nor could they ever ſucceed in their endeavours to diſplay the leaſt appearance of any, notwithſtanding all the challenges which our apologiſts have ſo frequently offered them. From the firſt commencement of the church ſeveral heretics have ſtarted up to combat it, and corrupt the faith. St. Irenæus, amongſt the other reaſons he produced to defeat their falſe opinions, objects, that they could work no miracles in confirmation of them. He maintains, that all their tenets are founded only in fraud, artifice, and impoſture; that they cannot cure diſeaſes, give ſight to the blind, or raiſe the dead, while ſuch miracles were continually ſeen to be performed, within the Chriſtian church, and through it's prayers. Tertullian, refuting the heretics of his time, makes uſe of the ſame arguments againſt them: "I am here ſpeaking of their mira-
"cles, ſays he; but, I find that the great-
"eſt of their miracles is that of their ſetting
"up for apoſtles, by acting in every re-
"ſpect contrary to thoſe whom they pre-
"tend to imitate: For the apoſtles raiſed
"the dead; but as for theſe they put the
"living to death. *Illi de mortuis ſuſcita-*
"*bant, iſti de vivis mortuos faciunt.*"

In

In other diſputes the truth hath ever been ſeen to derive authority from miracles; theſe have conſtantly decided the conteſt in her favour; and error hath never been able to gain the advantage over her: By miracles, the defenders of the divinity of JESUS CHRIST confounded the Arians; and, in conſequence of that convincing proof, a great number of thoſe who had followed their ſect renounced it. "GOD, ſaid they, cannot give evidence "in defence of error: The champions for "the conſubſtantiality of the WORD, wrought "true miracles. Truth, therefore, is on their "ſide, and we are compelled to join them." The Monothelites, in the third council of Conſtantinople, offer to prove the truth of what they advance by a miracle, and no one heſitates to accept their challenge: The fathers, being fully perſuaded that the devil had no power to do ſuch things, and that it was not poſſible for GOD to effect them in ſupport of falſhood, immediately conſent to the propoſal. A dead body is produced: a Monothelite monk mutters over the corpſe his profeſſion of faith, and ſeveral hours are ſpent in praying; but the dead riſes not.

How,

How, indeed, say the fathers, could it be, that a blasphemer should work miracles?

We come now to shew Rousseau, as we promised, that true miracles have ever been looked upon as the incommunicable property of truth, and of the true religion: We have already shewn him, that those sects which have separated from that religion, have never been able to produce any true miracles in support of their errors: That in all times, and all places, they have been called upon to work them if they could, and that all their trials and attempts have been without success. How well ought those who adhere to the Catholic church to have been persuaded of their point, that miracles are always, and in all circumstances, an indisputable proof of the truth of a doctrine; since they have so frequently offered those who maintained the grossest errors, to receive miracles performed in support of them, as full proof; with a promise to adopt them, in case they performed such! They therefore were firmly convinced, that the father of lies can do nothing of that kind by

by his agents; and that GOD alſo cannot grant ſuch a teſtimony in favour of error.

Where then are thoſe, *who, acknowledging that God does work miracles here below, pretend that the devil ſometimes imitates them?* Rouſſeau, ever bold at advancing whatever may furniſh him with any pretences for infidelity, and always ready to impoſe upon his readers by that means, imagines, without doubt, that he ought to be believed on his own bare word!

Let this hardy writer, who ſo unjuſtly calumniates the defenders of the authority of true miracles, — learn what an affront is offered to the Deity, by aſſerting, that the devil alſo can perform true miracles. "This, "obſerves a famous Chriſtian writer, is, in "another manner, to fall into the impiety of "idolatry; and this is the caſe of thoſe ſenſe-"leſs men, who one while have attributed to "the creature that which is inconſiſtent with "it's nature; and, at another, have wreſt-"ed from GOD that which cannot be taken "from divinity without deſtroying it. Some "have given the honour of a firſt cauſe to a "Being

" Being imperfect and essentially depen-
" dent; such as fire, air, water, the sun, and
" the stars; while others have transferred to
" wood and stone that holy and incommu-
" nicable name. Those precipitate them-
" selves into the same error, who attribute
" the knowledge of futurity, and the work-
" ing of miracles, to any other cause than
" GOD himself *.

The same writer, anticipating every subterfuge of the infidel antagonist, affirms also in several places, that it is impossible he who utters a false doctrine, should be able to work true miracles, miracles which can have no one but GOD for their author; because, in that case, the Deity would bear witness to a falshood; An event which can never happen.

Such is the constant and uniform doctrine of those men, who advance that GOD does work miracles here below. And all the apo-

* *Incommunicabile nomen lignis et lapidibus imposuerunt: in hunc errorem labuntur, qui—futurorum cognitionem, vel miraculorum operationem aliis causis quàm Deo ascribunt.* Sti. Thomæ, lib. ii. cont. gent. c. 3.

logists

logiſts for the Chriſtian religion have held the ſame language. The author of *Religion proved by facts*, with good reaſon, inſiſts upon this doctrine, and affirms, that it cannot be attacked without ſhaking the foundations of revelation. " It is impoſſible, ſays " he, for GOD to employ his power, or " permit the exertion of it, againſt himſelf. " Now I aver, that he would be the au- " thor of this diſorder, if he was to per- " form, or permit, the working of ſuch " miracles as might tend to invalidate a " known truth. The main end of miracles " is, to ſerve as the evidence of truth, and " truth cannot be divided againſt itſelf. If " therefore the Deity could either work, " or permit the working of, miracles, in " oppoſition to truth, ſuch miracles would " turn againſt himſelf, and his attributes " would claſh with one another; his power " with his veracity; a ſuppoſition which is " evidently abſurd: It is impoſſible then, " that the Deity ſhould perform miracles in " ſupport of falſhood."

The great Paſcal, the ſcourge of infidels, that ſublime and penetrative genius, who

will forever be the confuſion of our pretended freethinkers, was very far from apprehending that the devil could work true miracles, or that they could be joined with falſhood. He affirms, that miracles, very far from being uſeleſs, are, on the contrary, the foundation of truth, and a certain proof of it's exiſtence. And he not only maintains, that GOD cannot work miracles in favour of a man who aimed thereby to gloze over a falſe doctrine; but alſo, that he cannot even permit falſe miracles to be performed in behalf of error, without thereby contradicting the truth of his own. From theſe ſelf-evident principles, he rationally concludes, that miracles, as they laid the foundation of the church, and will preſerve it entire to the end.

In favour of this moſt important propoſition, the judgment of the Sorbonne, thus depoſes againſt the performance of Rouſſeau now under conſideration. " To admit thoſe " miraculous events which are produced in " proof of the Chriſtian Religion, and yet, " at the ſame time, to pretend that they " prove nothing at all; is to attack the pro-

" vidence,

" vidence, the power, and the veracity of
" GOD. There are no ſenſible effects more
" fitly adapted to ſtrike the mind, and to
" ſignify the high beheſts of the Deity, than
" miracles; this, experience has fully de-
" monſtrated. Take from them the force
" of evidence, and you deprive GOD him-
" ſelf of every external means whereby to
" manifeſt his will, by a revelation which
" is uſeful to mankind, and whereof they
" can take cognizance. The miraculous
" events which have happened, all ſpeak in
" favour of the religion we profeſs: This
" religion then is true: — If you refuſe to
" allow this inference, how will you recon-
" cile that refuſal with the perſuaſion that
" the providence of GOD extendeth itſelf
" over all nature, and that He cannot de-
" ceive us? — The error of thoſe men,
" who, from a natural perſuaſion, have
" been conſtantly induced to look upon mi-
" racles as the ſeal of divinity, would re-
" flect upon GOD himſelf; and they might
" juſtly ſay, *If, Lord, we are indeed deceiv-*
" *ed, it is thou thyſelf who deceiveſt us!*

Grounded in theſe principles, Mr. Beaumont, the Archbiſhop of Paris, ſays very rationally in a mandate on this ſame occaſion, " It is an artifice of the infidels of our " time, to endeavour, in their enumeration " of every particular proof of the truth of " our faith, to weaken it's evidence : — in " order from thence to form a concluſion, " that all the proofs united are as weak as " each, thus individually conſidered. The " prophecies caſt an aſtoniſhing luſtre on " the miracles, which the miracles in their " turn, reflect back upon the prophecies. " But this connexion, which GOD himſelf " hath placed between the different proofs " of his religion, does not hinder any one " of them, ſeparately, from having in itſelf " all the power neceſſary for the eſtabliſh- " ment of the truth of it." He next proceeds to combat thoſe who venture to aſſert, that true miracles are equivocal, and to compare them with the pretended miracles performed by devils; and he concludes with great propriety, " All the fa- " thers of the church, and, after them, all " orthodox divines, have conſtantly and ſuc-

ceſsfully,

" ceſsfully oppoſed againſt what was ad-
" vanced by the enemies of religion, that in-
" finite number of cures wrought by JESUS
" CHRIST, through the fertile and power-
" ful virtue whoſe ſource was in himſelf."

When Rouſſeau tells us, " Since the ma-
" gicians of Pharaoh worked the ſame mi-
" racles, even in the preſence of Moſes, as
" he himſelf performed by the expreſs com-
" mand of GOD; why might not they, in
" his abſence, from the ſame proofs pre-
" tend to the ſame authority?" Let us aſk, Can any one make a more falſe and chimerical ſuppoſition? What foundation is there for it? Can he cite a ſingle example, or fact, which any way tends to authorize it? Certainly not one: Nor will he ever find that GOD hath permitted the devil to perform falſe miracles, and hath not, at the ſame time, oppoſed the truth of his own, to confound them. If GOD permits Pharaoh's magicians to effect ſome deluſions, it is to add more luſtre to the triumph of his ſervant Moſes; and if he ſuffers them to contend with his ſervant, it is only that he may more glorioufly overcome their artifices. Moſes,

afterwards, ſtrikes them with horrible ulcers: They dare no longer appear before him; all their ſagacity is confounded; all their deceptions are expoſed; nor can they, with all their art, ſuccour Ægypt, or defend themſelves againſt the terrible plagues wherewith GOD puniſhes it. See here an inſtance of what will be the caſe, if ever the Deity ſhould permit the devil to exhibit illuſion, in countenance of error and falſhood.

But, granting Rouſſeau all theſe falſe propoſitions, muſt he not ſtill be obliged to combat every light which reaſon affords, ere he can frame a doubt whether the miracles which prove the Chriſtian Religion, have GOD for their author? Do they not bear every the moſt ſtriking character of divinity? And what was the end and deſign of them? — the overthrow of idolatry, and all it's attendant abominations; the aboliſhment of the worſhip of devils; the deſtruction of their tyrannical empire over mankind; the extinction of thoſe innumerable errors which have overſpread the earth; a victory over all thoſe paſſions which ſubdued man

by

by degrading him; and then, the eſtabliſhment, upon all theſe ruins, of a morality the moſt holy and pure imaginable. After the recital of atchievements, thus ſtriking and deciſive, can the infidel ſtill make a queſtion, whether the devil could have performed thoſe miracles which confirm the Chriſtian Religion?

" Let any one, ſaid Tertullian, to the " Roman Senate, let any one bring before " your tribunals a man who is certainly " known to be poſſeſſed of the devil; and " then let any Chriſtian whomſoever com- " mand him to ſpeak: The conſequence " will be, that he will as truly confeſs his " diabolical nature before this man, as he " hath been accuſtomed to feign before " others falſly, that he is a GOD. More- " over, let any one of thoſe perſons be brought " hither, of whom you inſiſt that they " are informed with ſome Deity, who may " be inflated with a ſpirit, which agitates " him ſo ſoon as the ſmoke of the ſacrifices " begins to aſcend; and may utter his ora- " cles by interrupted ſobbings: Do this; and " when you have ſo done, if either that

" celeſtial

" celeſtial goddeſs, who foretels rain ; or " Æſculapius, the father of medicine, or " all the gods together, do not confeſs themſelves to be devils ; and that becauſe they " dare not lie to a Chriſtian ;—then ſhed the " blood of that impudent Chriſtian upon the " very ſpot." " Can I, continues Tertullian, give you a more evident or certain " proof, or illuſtrate the truth with greater " ſimplicity? Here it appears in full ſplendor, and here it is ſheltered from every " ſhadow of ſuſpicion. You could not ſure " pretend to call this an effect of magic ; " or ſuſpect ſuch an event to be an impoſture or a cheat. How could any one oppoſe a truth ſo clear and manifeſt? By " this means your gods will not only diſcover to you, that neither they nor any " others like them, are gods : But you will " alſo be forced, by the ſame means, to acknowledge Him who is the true GOD? " Let them pronounce what JESUS CHRIST " and his whole hiſtory is ; whether he be " only a mere man like others ; or whether " he be only a magician ; whether after his " death his body was raiſed again from the " tomb ; or whether it ſtill remains amongſt

" the

" the dead. Will they dare deny that
" he is in heaven, and that he muſt one
" day deſcend from thence, and fill all man-
" kind, true Chriſtians excepted, with ter-
" ror and amazement, as being the Power,
" the Wiſdom, the Word, and the Son
" of GOD ? Rather let them, if they can,
" clear themſelves from ignominy, and
" condemnation ; and let them juſtify that
" they are not ſuch impious ſpirits, as
" with their followers ought to undergo all
" the rigours of judgment, in juſt puniſh-
" ment of their wickedneſs."

" They perceive the power and authori-
" ty which the bare pronouncing the name
" of CHRIST gives us over them : They
" dread it, and are ſubdued by his ſervants.
" So that at the leaſt touch, or the ſlighteſt
" breath, from the inſtant of our command-
" ing them ; you behold them forſake bo-
" dies, all confuſed, and full of rage and de-
" ſpair ; You, then, who believe them when
" they utter falſhood, believe them alſo
" when they ſpeak the truth : No one lies to
" his diſadvantage, but with a view to his
" profit ; and we readily believe thoſe who

" make

" make confeſſions contrary to their intereſt:
" Such are thoſe teſtimonies which the gods
" of their own accord give, and which they
" are wont to bear to Chriſtians: We can-
" not give credit to them, without at the
" ſame time believing in JESUS CHRIST;
" They eſtabliſh the TRUTH OF OUR
" SCRIPTURES, and demonſtrate the cer-
" tainty of our hope." Reſpecting theſe ſcriptures we proceed to ſpeak in our next.

DISSERTATION IV.

On the SCRIPTURES.

IN what we have offered hitherto, we have ſuppoſed nothing divine in the SACRED SCRIPTURES; we have not regarded them as books inſpired by GOD, and containing his word: We have only conſidered them as books wherein *hiſtorical* truths might be ſearched for and inveſtigated; and wherein it may be known, whether they are fictitious or well founded; whether the events they recite are fabulous or true; and whether thoſe who paſs for their authors, are really ſuch. But after having, by means of the ſuffrage and tradition of

ſo

ſo many people, proved the truth and certainty of all theſe records, we muſt draw from thence the conſequences, which are the natural reſult of our obſervations upon them.

Now theſe BOOKS abound with the recital of miracles, which were wrought by the authors of them, to confirm the divinity of their miſſion. Thoſe authors everywhere declare themſelves to be the meſſengers of GOD, his oracles and prophets, and to be inſpired by him in whatever they pronounce; they proteſt to utter nothing but the truth, and their miracles give them credit — I cannot therefore regard theſe books as *hiſtorically* true, without, at the ſame time, acknowledging their divinity, the ſanctity of their authors, and the truth of their doctrine; nor without reſpecting their words as the words of GOD himſelf.

I afterwards examine theſe ſame books, as to what they teach us concerning that ſociety which hath borne teſtimony to them, and I there find that JESUS CHRIST is it's inſtitutor; his ſpirit it's ſoul; and that he will

will continue with it even unto the end of time; that he will never permit *the gates of hell to prevail againſt it*; that this ſociety is the baſis and pillar of truth; that it's founder hath furniſhed it with apoſtles, prophets, evangeliſts, paſtors, and teachers, ſo as that we may not *be toſſed about with every wind of doctrine*. I there read that whoſoever ſhall not hearken to it's precepts, ſhall be looked upon *as an heathen man and a publican*. All theſe things, and many other ſuch, which are to be found in theſe books, and which are acknowledged as divine, oblige me, by conſequence, to regard this ſociety as of a divine original.

I therefore ceaſe to look upon the church as a ſociety merely human: I behold it inveſted with a divine authority. I add then, to that teſtimony which it hath borne to the ſcriptures, as a ſociety ancient as themſelves, and founded upon them — another teſtimony of a more excellent nature, which it bears to them as infallible, and the repoſitory of divine revelation. And thus, by a neceſſary conſequence drawn from an argument which is widely diſtant from a vicious *circle*,

circle, the ſcriptures and the church mutually prove each other.

The perfect correſpondence of reaſon and ſcripture induces our ſubmiſſion to the church's authority: — *Reaſon*, becauſe it informs us, that we ought to refer ourſelves to the teſtimony of ſo great a ſociety as the church, reſpecting thoſe facts which conſtitute the divinity of our ſcriptures: — and thoſe ſame *ſcriptures*, becauſe, in the next place they teach us, that the church is a proper tribunal for the deciſion of all points belonging to revelation. We do not therefore, as Rouſſeau pretends, prove that the church hath a right of determination, becauſe it hath adjudged itſelf to have this right; but we previouſly ſhew, that the church was founded in order to determine that it had this right; and after having eſtabliſhed the foundation of it's deciſion, that ſame deciſion furniſhes us afterwards with a new proof of it's right.

To render what I have been obſerving ſtill more obvious, it may be proper to make uſe of a compariſon, which will ſerve to diſſipate

diſſipate all the cunning devices of the unbeliever. In a civil ſtate, the commonwealth bears teſtimony to the truth of the laws, and aſcertains their exiſtence and authenticity. Does any diſpute happen reſpecting the nature, prerogatives, or conſtitution of a ſtate? In this caſe the ſociety, which compoſes that ſtate, atteſts the truth of thoſe laws upon which it is founded. After being aſſured therefore, by this irrefragable teſtimony, of the certainty of thoſe laws, we may conſult them, in order to learn what are the privileges of that ſociety which bears teſtimony to them, and what ought to be the form of it's government. Apply we this to the church.

The ſcripture is that to the church which the laws are to a ſtate. As the ſtate atteſts the authenticity of the laws of ſociety, the church in like manner atteſts the authenticity and truth of the ſcriptures. To know the conſtitution and prerogatives of the ſtate we have recourſe to the laws, after being aſſured of their exiſtence by the teſtimony of that ſociety whereof the ſtate is compoſed. In the ſame manner, to diſcover the

the rights and qualities of the church, we conſult the ſcriptures, whoſe truth is warranted to us by the tradition and teſtimony of that ſociety which conſtitutes the church. In theſe archives of divine legiſlature, we learn, what the church is, and what are it's proper prerogatives. This ſociety doth not give the ſcriptures their authority; nor doth it imprint on theſe books that character of divinity wherewith they are inveſted: It only atteſts the truth of the facts they relate; and this truth demonſtrates the divinity of theſe books; and conſequently there is no falſe argument in the manner whereby we prove the divinity of the ſcriptures, and the authority of the church. Theſe two teſtimonies reciprocally borne by the ſcriptures, and the ſociety which preſerves thoſe ſcriptures, are of a very different nature. The evidence we make uſe of to prove to the infidel the truth of the ſcriptures, is not, as indeed we have before obſerved, of a divine or ſupernatural kind; it conſiſts ſimply of a public and perpetual tradition, atteſted by the whole body of the ſociety, viſible in all ages, and evidently reaching back to the firſt origin of the ſociety, and of the ſcriptures.

ſcriptures. But yet ſuch a tradition is of infinite efficacy to eſtabliſh the antiquity of the ſcriptures, and their hiſtorical truth, from which their divine authority neceſſarily reſults. The authority of theſe books thus demonſtrated, proves to us, in the next place, the authority of the church, and the right which it hath to decide in all matters of religion.

The church's authority being once eſtabliſhed upon ſuch ſolid foundations, all the objections of Rouſſeau, and thoſe difficulties which he endeavours to exaggerate and magnify, prove abortive, and are demoliſhed, againſt the immutability of that ſacred ſtructure. Rouſſeau was very ſenſible of this; ſince, as we proceed to take notice, he has not attempted to depreciate this authority in our opinion, but only to bring us back into thoſe various difficulties common to private ſects: *Depart from this*, as he has told us, ſpeaking of the church's authority, *and you run into endleſs diſcuſſions*. But we will not depart from it, becauſe, as we proceed to ſhew, our attachment to this authority is ſolidly founded. We are excuſed, therefore, from running

running into all thoſe diſcuſſions into which Rouſſeau ſeems deſirous to force us.

§ II. From the time I am convinced of the Church authority, I, as an unlearned man, have no longer any need of that *immenſe erudition* which Rouſſeau judges neceſſary, for the examination of the Chriſtian Religion: I have no need to *go back to the earlieſt antiquity, to examine, weigh, and confront, prophecies, revelations, and facts, with all the records of faith which have made their appearance in all the countries of the world: To aſcertain their times, places, authors, and occaſions.* I have no more need of *the vaſt critical ſagacity*, which Rouſſeau deems *requiſite* for every one, in order to *diſtinguiſh pieces which are authentic, from thoſe which are fictitious. To compare objections with anſwers; tranſlations with their originals; to judge of the impartiality of witneſſes, of their good ſenſe, and of their intelligence; to know if nothing has been added to their teſtimony; if nothing hath been changed, tranſpoſed, or forged; to obviate the contradictions which ſtill remain; to judge what weight the ſilence of our opponents ought* Common men muſt reſt in the authority of the Chriſtian church.

to have, with reſpect to the facts alledged againſt them; to diſcover whether thoſe allegations were known to them; whether they did not diſdain them too much to make any reply to them; whether theſe books were common enough for ours to reach them; or if we were honeſt enough to let them have a free circulation amongſt us, and to leave their ſtrongeſt objections in full force.

All theſe difficulties, which are only founded in artifice and infidelity, and many others, will no more impede me; as ſoon as I have diſcovered the authority of the church. I have found every thing in that. This is a ſhort path, which extricates me from that labyrinth into which the infidel would force me. I am diſpenſed from entering into all thoſe *horrible diſcuſſions* wherein he would engage me: ſince I have gained a knowledge of the means which will deliver me from them.

That authority on which I rely, has made all the neceſſary reſearches and examinations for me, and that much more ſurely and exactly than I could have done: by relying on

on it's teſtimony, *I recur back to the earlieſt antiquity*; *I examine, I weigh, I confront prophecies, revelations, and facts, with all the monuments of faith which have appeared in all the countries of the world*; becauſe this authority has actually done all thoſe things, in all times, and that in ſuch a manner as leaves me in no doubt. Being conſtantly ſubſiſting, it *aſcertains me of their times, places, authors, and occaſions*; becauſe it hath preſerved the remembrance of them, by an uninterrupted tradition. I have no more need of a great critical ſagacity, in order to diſtinguiſh authentic pieces from thoſe which are ſuppoſititious; to know whether nothing be ſuppreſſed or added, tranſpoſed, changed, or falſified. The vigilance of the church, it's ſcrupulous attention, it's integrity, and even the envy of it's enemies, who would not have failed publicly to cenſure any alteration and interpolations, had it ſuffered any ſuch; the impoſſibility there was of falſifying or altering that multitude of copies which have been made of thoſe holy books from the beginning, in all languages, and in every nation of the world. Theſe circumſtances eaſily diſpel all my apprehenſions, and war-

rant to me the perfectneſs of the ſacred depoſit, with which it hath been intruſted.

The promiſes of God to his church, and the idea I have of his wiſdom, will not permit me to entertain the leaſt ſuſpicion of the purity of all thoſe records. What! would the omniſcient GOD have informed mankind of his will; and would He have eſtabliſhed a Religion, without conſidering how to maintain it afterwards? Would he have judged revelation neceſſary, — and yet have neglected the preſervation of it? Would he have ſuffered an alteration in thoſe records, from which he commands us to learn the knowledge of him? And would he have permitted mankind to derive error and falſehood from thoſe very ſources wherein he commands them to ſeek after the truth? — Had he ſuffered that in theſe books which he hath inveſted with his whole authority, by means of that teſtimony which he hath borne to them, that the truth ſhould be confounded with untruth, and his Divine Word, mixed with the fictions of men; — Would not this have been to draw us into ſnares, and lead our darkened minds into error?

It

It was eſſentially requiſite therefore that Divine Providence ſhould take a particular care of theſe books, which his own Spirit had dictated. By communicating revelation he engaged to preſerve it from all thoſe defilements which it might have received either from the frailty or malice of mankind.

§. III. In order to ſhew more plainly, the extraordinary providence which GOD inceſſantly grants to thoſe ſacred books, which Himſelf cauſed to be written, let us caſt our eyes over that multitude of copies, and tranſlations which have been made of them at different periods. It is true we ſhall find in them ſome variations; but variations which no way eſſentially affect the matters they treat of.

Concerning the various copies and readings of the S. S.

Among all the verſions, all the different texts, whatever they may be, the ſame laws reſult from them, the ſame miracles, the ſame predictions, the ſame chain of hiſtory, the ſame body of doctrine; in a word, the ſame *ſubſtance*. Thus, whatever is eſſential in the ſacred volumes, hath ever remained

unalterable: Thoſe differences of texts, which in other reſpects are quite unimportant, ſerve but to ſhew the great and venerable antiquity of the ſacred originals. From whence do they ariſe indeed, but from that multitude of copies which hath been made of them in the courſe of ſo many ages. From an ignorance of the original language, which ceaſed to be common; from that change which length of time hath produced in the places where the Jewiſh people reſided; from the obſcurity in which it hath involved the ancient genealogies, whoſe thread hath been long loſt; or from the oblivion of dates and facts ſo very remote, as to have eſcaped the memory of mankind? It is the ſame with regard to the verſions. They prove, in the next place, how ancient the language of ſcripture is, ſince all their elegance is loſt, and we cannot give them their beauty and force, with the utmoſt exactneſs. The various readings in the text ſtill further ſhow what religious reſpect has always been paid to theſe ſacred books. People rather choſe to give them ſuch as they found them, than to take the liberty of changing or correcting in them what might tend to embarraſs. In

all

all the places which may poſſibly raiſe a difficulty, or make the ſenſe obſcure, no one has ever ventured to reſtore a ſingle expreſſion, by reaſon or conjecture. They have ever exactly followed the *faith* of the copies; and as the immutable nature of tradition has never permitted wholeſome doctrine to be altered; ſo it has been reaſonably apprehended, that other defects, if any remained, would ſerve only to prove that no one hath altered any thing out of his own fancy. Shall the variance of ſome few texts be able after this, to prejudice the divinity of theſe holy books? And hath not Divine Providence done every thing in their behalf, which we could deſire, by preſerving the ground and ſubſtance of them unalterable?

All theſe reaſons may ſuffice to anſwer Rouſſeau's inquiry, "who ſhall aſſure me "that theſe books are faithfully tranſlated, "or that it is even poſſible they ſhould be "ſo?*" Nothing more is requiſite in order to evince the faithfulneſs of theſe tranſlations than their entire conformity with

* Vol. III. p. 163.

each other, in regard to fundamentals. From whence, let us aſk, can this conformity proceed, unleſs from that reſemblance which they all bear, in this reſpect, to the original, their common ſource? In ſhort, the authority of the church, which can only admit of ſuch tranſlations as are faithful in point of ſubſtance, is to us a ſure warrant for the faithfulneſs of all thoſe which it authorizes and approves.

With the aſſiſtance, and under the ſanction, of ſuch an authority, what need is there of making any ſtop at all at, thoſe frivolous details of difficulties which Rouſſeau is pleaſed to throw together, in order to puzzle the minds of his readers? Ought I to give myſelf the trouble of judging what weight the ſilence of opponents ought to have, with regard to facts alledged againſt them? And beſides, Can one doubt whether all thoſe allegations were known to them? Have they not themſelves made mention of them? Nay, have they not given them an additional weight, by that teſtimony which demonſtration has extorted from them? "I am

"not

" not now to ſeek, ſays Celſus *, (ſpeak-
" ing of the Chriſtians) I am not now to
" ſeek what they think: For I have fully
" known and diſcovered all theſe matters."
Non quod ſcire quæram quid ſentiant nam omnia novi. — Celſus does not contend with the Chriſtians concerning the truth of the facts which they maintain; on the contrary, the very manner wherein he endeavours to explain them, tends only to give them a further degree of evidence. Julian the apoſtate, who alſo was not ignorant of the Chriſtian Religion, nor omitted any thing which might ſerve to decry it, hath, in like manner, never dared to charge theſe facts, or the records which contain the relation of them, with forgery. So that their veracity becomes fortified as much by the unanimous conſent of thoſe who believe, as by that of Pagans and heretics. But beſides all this; Do the conſequences deducible from theſe facts any way depend upon the knowledge which the adverſaries of the Chriſtian Religion may have of them? May not they, independently of their teſtimony, have all neceſ-

* Apud originem.

ſary

ſary certainty? Are not theſe facts of themſelves convincing and deciſive? — What fine criticiſm! To render facts demonſtrative, it is neceſſary that their opponents ſhould have been known, combatted, and refuted; and that we alſo know whatever they may have had to urge againſt their evidence. Now is not this an excellent method of reaſoning?

Are not the atteſtation of thoſe who ſaw them, and of the many people who have believed them, together with the conſtant and univerſal tradition which hath perpetuated the memory of them, ſufficient to render them indubitable? What if theſe facts had ſubdued the minds of all mankind, and had not afterwards ſuffered a ſingle adverſary, would it then have been neceſſary to ceaſe from giving credit to them? What various oppoſitions have not theſe facts ſilenced? How many men have not they attracted to the Chriſtian Religion, who before were it's implacable enemies? Is not the teſtimony of thoſe men, who were impelled and conquered, by mere evidence alone, far more powerful than the reſiſtance of thoſe others, who, like Rouſſeau, never have any thing to oppoſe

poſe to ſuch extraordinary proofs, but low abuſe, unmanly calumnies, and malevolent cavils?

S. S. ſufficiently known and read.

§. IV. Who can have a doubt, whether our books have been ſufficiently common, ſo as that they might have been known to the whole world? The multitude of copies and tranſlations, which, from the beginning has been made of them, rendered the knowledge and reading of them eaſy to every one: Thus have not Celſus, Porphyry, and Julian, made uſe of them, in their books againſt the Chriſtians? Theſe records of our Religion have been made public throughout the whole earth. The circumſtances of times, perſons, and places, have made the examination of them eaſy to every reader. The world hath been informed; the world hath believed: and if we never ſo ſlightly conſider the manner in which the Chriſtian Religion was ſpread abroad, and got into reputation, are we not forced to grant, that no buſineſs was ever tranſacted with greater maturity of deliberation, and more precaution, with fuller knowledge, or on deeper reflexion.

Rouſſeau

Rouſſeau doubts *whether*, in the books of our adverſaries, *we were honeſt enough to leave their ſtrongeſt objections in their full force.* He is ſenſible that all the objections which ſtill ſubſiſt againſt the Chriſtian Religion, are not weighty and adequate enough; and therefore, to indulge his infidelity, he chuſes to fancy that there have been ſome ſuch heretofore, which were ſtronger, and which therefore we have ſecretly retrenched: But upon what ground does he ſuppoſe this? In order to impugn the honeſty of the Chriſtian church, was it not neceſſary to have in hand ſome proofs of ſo heavy and injurious an accuſation? Certainly it was neceſſary to find out ſome ancient author, who had complained of the fraud pretended, and to be able to produce an original of thoſe works, where one might meet with thoſe conſiderable objections, which had been ſuppreſſed in the copies. But without any proofs at all, without the ſlighteſt probable evidence, to ſtart ſuch a ſuſpicion againſt a ſociety, which hath given ſo many tokens of it's candour and ſincerity; what licentious boldneſs is this? What could the Chriſtian Religion

have

have been the better for ſuppreſſing the objections of it's adverſaries? The infidel, always upon the look out, would not have failed to repair and preſerve, on his ſide of the argument, whatever that church might have wiſhed to deſtroy, in aid of it's own. Beſides, what intereſt could the Chriſtian Religion have for acting in this manner? Hath that Religion, which always defied it's adverſaries, and incited them to the combat, ever ſhewn a fear of their objections? And was it not for it's advantage to ſuffer them to exiſt? They were as ſo many monuments of it's victories and triumph; and, as indeed it hath always proved, whatever objections may be raiſed againſt it, will ever redound to it's glory, and the confuſion of infidelity.

Rouſſeau clearly ſhows us, he hath nothing ſolid to alledge againſt the Chriſtian Religion: He fancies himſelf very ſtrong in argument, when he has ſtarted a variety of doubts reſpecting points which carry with them the fulleſt evidence, and laboured to ſpread an extravagant ſcepticiſm over the moſt certain facts. But let him, as much as he will, multiply the cavils and difficulties

ties which he aſſembles together againſt them from all parts: The believer, fully convinced of the church's authority, which we have demonſtrated, will give himſelf no trouble about them; and even though his capacity ſhould not enable him to reſolve them, his faith would be always ſufficiently firm to hold them in deriſion.

It is in that brief view only that we have conſidered the S. S. not deſigning to enter into a minute diſcuſſion of them; Thoſe who are deſirous of doing ſo, may find in Dr. Hartley's Obſervations on Man, Vol. II. ſufficient to afford them ample ſatisfaction.

DISSERTATION V.

The MORAL CHARACTER of JESUS CHRIST compared with that of SOCRATES.

Introduction.

§. I. AMONGST the various evidences to prove the truth and divinity of our holy Religion, that taken from the moral character of JESUS CHRIST is, perhaps, not the leaſt cogent. Indeed it cannot but raiſe our ſurprize to think that any

any rational being can contemplate this character, without wonder, adoration, and love: a character manifeſtly ſuperior to all others, whether real or fictitious; whether drawn by the faithful hand of the hiſtorian, or by the more flattering pencil of the orator or poet.

Deiſts and unbelievers are fond of exalting the character of SOCRATES, and of comparing him with, or preferring him to, JESUS CHRIST. We are very willing to pay all due honour to the merit of Socrates, perhaps more than ſome diſparagers of revelation may approve: We will readily grant him to have been one of the beſt and wiſeſt of the heathen ſages *; but, conſidered in every view, and with the moſt partial eye, he falls, and muſt neceſſarily fall infinitely ſhort of that divine Redeemer, who was the conſummate pattern of all perfection.

* See Revelation examined with candor, Vol. III. p. 72.

Let

Let us hear what Rouſſeau has to ſay upon the ſubject. "With regard to revelation, ſays he, could I reaſon better, or "were I better informed, I might be made "*ſenſible*, perhaps, of it's truth, and of it's "utility to thoſe who are ſo happy as to "believe it; but, if there are ſome proofs "in it's favour, which I am not able to invalidate, there appear alſo to me many "objections againſt it which I cannot reſolve." In anſwer to this let us remark, that if there are proofs in favour of a fact which cannot be invalidated; and if the nature of that fact is ſuch, as to render objections to it very natural and probable; ought not every reaſonable man to ſilence his objections, and to receive the fact upon proofs which cannot be invalidated? —

Rouſſeau's teſtimony to the excellency of the S.S.

§. II. He goes on—"I will confeſs further, "that the majeſty of the ſcriptures ſtrikes "me with admiration; —as the purity of "the goſpel hath it's influence on my heart. "Peruſe the works of the philoſophers, "with all their pomp of diction; how "mean, how contemptible are they, com-

"pared

" pared with the ſcripture! Is it poſſible
" that a book, at once ſo ſimple and ſo ſub-
" lime, ſhould be merely the work of man?
" — Is it poſſible that the ſacred perſonage
" whoſe hiſtory it contains, ſhould be him-
" ſelf a mere man? Do we find that he aſ-
" ſumed the tone of an enthuſiaſt, or ambi-
" tious ſectary? — What ſweetneſs, what
" purity in his manners! What an affecting
" gracefulneſs in his delivery! What ſub-
" limity in his maxims! What profound
" wiſdom in his diſcourſe! What preſence
" of mind, what ſagacity, what truth in
" his replies! How great a command over
" his paſſions! — Where is the man, where
" the philoſopher, who could ſo live and ſo
" die, without weakneſs, and without oſten-
" tation? — When Plato deſcribed his ima-
" ginary good man, loaded with all the
" ſhame of guilt, yet meriting the higheſt
" rewards of virtue; he deſcribed exactly
" the character of JESUS CHRIST*. The
" reſemblance was ſo ſtriking that all the
" fathers perceived it."

* See Spen's Plato.

Now let us ſtand ſtill awhile, and aſk, whether it were poſſible to conceive that theſe words could proceed from the mouth of a profeſſed unbeliever? — To conceive, that a man who uſes ſuch language, ſhould immediately declare himſelf againſt revelation, and, in the gaiety of his heart, plunge into the very depths of ſcepticiſm? This is a contradiction without parallel; and one might believe without injuſtice, that a hand no leſs eloquent than Rouſſeau's, had interpolated this and the paſſage next quoted, in defence of revealed Religion, againſt a profeſſion of faith directly to the contrary.

" What prepoſſeſſion, ſays he, what blind-
" neſs muſt it be, to compare the ſon of
" Sophroniſcus with the ſon of Mary? What
" an infinite diſproportion is there between
" them! Socrates, dying without pain or
" ignominy, eaſily ſupported his character
" to the laſt; and if his death, however
" eaſy, had not crowned his life, it might
" have been doubted whether Socrates, with
" all his wiſdom, was any thing more than
" a vain ſophiſt. He invented, it is ſaid,
" the

" the theory of morals; others, however,
" had before put them in practice. He had
" only to ſay, what they had done; and
" reduce their examples to precepts. Ari-
" ſtides had been juſt, before Socrates de-
" fined juſtice: Leonidas gave up his life
" for his country, before Socrates declared
" patriotiſm to be a duty. The Spartans
" were a ſober people, before Socrates re-
" commended ſobriety; before he had even
" defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtu-
" ous men. But where could *Jeſus* learn
" among his compatriots, that pure and
" ſublime morality, of which he only hath
" given us both precept and example? The
" greateſt wiſdom was made known amidſt
" the moſt bigotted fanaticiſm; and the
" ſimplicity of the moſt heroic virtues did
" honour to the vileſt people of the earth.—
" The death of *Socrates*, peaceably philo-
" ſophiſing with his friends, appears the
" moſt agreeable that could be wiſhed for:
" That of *Jeſus*, expiring in the midſt of
" agonizing pains, abuſed, inſulted, curſed
" by a whole nation, is the moſt horrible
" that could be feared. *Socrates*, in re-
" ceiving the cup of poiſon, bleſſed indeed

" the weeping executioner who adminiſter-
" ed it; but *Jeſus*, in the midſt of excru-
" ciating tortures prayed for his mercileſs
" tormenters. Yes: If the life and death
" of Socrates are thoſe of a ſage, the life
" and death of Jeſus are thoſe of a GOD.
" Shall we ſuppoſe the evangelical hiſtory a
" mere fiction? Indeed it bears not the
" marks of fiction: *On the contrary, the*
" *hiſtory of Socrates, which no body preſumes*
" *to doubt, is not ſo well atteſted as that of*
" *Jeſus Chriſt.* Such a ſuppoſition in fact
" only ſhifts the difficulty, without remov-
" ing it: It is more inconceivable that a
" number of perſons ſhould agree to write
" ſuch an hiſtory, than that one only ſhould
" furniſh the ſubject of it. The Jewiſh au-
" thors were incapable of the diction, and
" ſtrangers to the morality contained in the
" goſpel; the marks of whoſe truth are ſo
" grand, ſo ſtriking, ſo perfectly inimitable,
" that the inventor would be a more aſto-
" niſhing character than the hero."

Now, can any words be more juſt, and more eloquent, than theſe, or contain a fuller apology for revealed Religion, " the

" marks

" marks of whoſe truth, as he obſerves, are " ſo grand, ſo ſtriking, ſo perfectly in- " imitable, that the inventor would be a " more aſtoniſhing character than the hero?" Is it poſſible for the ſame fountain to ſend forth ſweet waters and bitter, — that which empoiſons, and that which gives life? — Well ſaid an elegant writer *, that " Con- " tradictions are an accident inſeparable " from the malady called *error*." For what can be more contradictory than for the writer, who has delivered what we have juſt repeated, to continue ſaying, in the ſame breath, that that goſpel, whoſe marks of truth are ſo ſtriking, inimitable and invincible, " abounds with ſuch circumſtances " and relations, as it is impoſſible for a man " of ſenſe either to conceive or admit?" — Yet he hath ſaid above, that " the hiſto- " ry of Socrates, which no body preſumes " to doubt, is not ſo well atteſted as that of " JESUS CHRIST." — How then can any man preſume to doubt that hiſtory of JESUS CHRIST, when he has ſtronger evidence to believe it, than he has to believe that of

* Biſhop Boſſuet.

Socrates, which no body presumes to doubt? — How simple is truth — how inconsistent and confused are falshood and error!

Rousseau grants there is "an infinite dis-"proportion between JESUS CHRIST and "Socrates." After this confession we may hope, no infidel will presume to draw a parallel between them: None but the enemies of revelation would presume to draw a parallel: Such will readily allow all imaginable virtues to CHRIST, rather than grant him the character of GOD made man to redeem the human race: They will readily grant that Socrates is inferior to JESUS CHRIST, provided we will dispense with the adoration of the divine and human nature in the unity of his person. But all their praise is blasphemy, so long as they consider and speak of JESUS as a mere man; thus robbing him of his divinity, and destroying, at the same stroke, all the sacred mysteries, and, by consequence, all the true Religion which JESUS CHRIST came to teach.

§. III. How-

§. III. However, to ſhew the infinite ſuperiority of the character of JESUS CHRIST to that of Socrates, and of all others; let us awhile forget the auguſt qualities of the MESSIAH, and only conſider what appears at firſt view in that book, which contains the hiſtory of his life. Moral character of JESUS CHRIST.

Have we ever ſeen or heard of, upon earth, any man in whom we might diſcern ſuch characters of innocence and holineſs; ſuch contempt and indifference for the world; ſuch love of virtue; ſuch zeal for the glory of GOD, as diſcovered themſelves in JESUS CHRIST? Have we ever ſeen a man ſo totally exempt from all the foibles inſeparable from human nature? Can the eye of prejudice itſelf diſcern theſe virtues in the ſon of Sophroniſcus? Abſolutely undeceived, as he was with reſpect to the Pagan fables, and convinced of the futility of their worſhip, did he not continue to ſacrifice to the heathen Gods, as well in public as private? Did he not approve the oracle of Delphos, which ordered him with the true voice of a dæmon, to conform himſelf

to the idolatrous worſhip eſtabliſhed in every place? — Did ſuch a conduct ſhew much contempt and indifference for the world, or much zeal and love for the truth? Doth not Socrates, in his laſt moments, when he boaſted himſelf ſo ſtrong, and ſo ſuperior to his fate, doth he not rather ſpeak like a man who wiſhed for, than like a ſage who was intimately perſuaded and aſſured of immortality? After having endeavoured to convince his friends in the priſon, one plainly diſcerns that he is not fully convinced himſelf. He finiſhes his diſcourſe with doubts, and all his reaſonings only end in averting from his mind the dread and the image of death. See then, if this philoſopher, "who penetrated, "as they ſay, into the boſom of the Deity, "who diſcerned ſo many uſeful truths, and "practiced all the virtues," if he made one of his apologiſts believe. Dying he ſacrificed a cock to the God Æſculapius—a commendable ceremony only, ſay his apologiſts, which the popular Religion required: What ſincerity was this, or rather, what weakneſs! If he believed that Religion true, there is an end of his reputation; if he believed and knew

knew it to be falſe, what becomes of his ſincerity and veneration for GOD and truth?

Turn your eyes hence upon the author of the Chriſtian Religion, and regard no more ſo ſacrilegious a parallel. Not a word of deceit ever falls from the lips of JESUS: From his birth he was holy and undefiled, without ſpot, ſeparate from ſinners: Perfect innocence, purity of manners, temperance, juſtice, meekneſs, goodneſs, diſintereſtedneſs, patience carried to the higheſt degree, and, above all, an entire devotion to GOD, an ardent zeal, and ready ſuffering for the ſalvation of men, — theſe are the ſtriking traits which compoſe the picture of the bleſſed Emmanuel.

With morals ſo pure he aſſumed not any extreme ſeverity: He was not of a moroſe and auſtere carriage: We find him at weddings to which he was invited: We meet him at feaſts with different perſons; good phyſician, he never ſhunned the ſick whereever they might be found. Studious of occaſions to do well, ſpite of the cenſure of the haughty Phariſees! There never appeared

peared in him the leaſt trace of ambition; the leaſt appearance of oſtentation: He ſpoke, and he lived in perfect diſdain of riches: He paid no particular deference to the great: He cenſured equally, and equally rebuked, Sadducees, Phariſees, and Scribes, — without endeavouring to pleaſe one more than another. He took particular care not to foment the diviſions which he found amongſt the people: His firſt diſcourſe on the Mount tended to calm their ſpirits, and to pronounce happineſs on the peaceable: He declared that it was our duty to render to Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's, and to GOD the things which are GOD's. He diſpelled from the minds of his diſciples every idea of power and dominion: He abaſed himſelf ſo far, as even to waſh their feet; thus giving them the fineſt leſſon of humility: He repreſſed the zeal of Peter, and voluntarily ſurrendered himſelf up to thoſe who came to apprehend him.

JESUS CHRIST is the great teacher of love by his own example; humane, compaſſionate: His heart was animated with an univerſal benevolence worthy the Saviour of mankind.

mankind. To cure the ſick, to comfort the afflicted, to inſtruct the ignorant, to relieve the unfortunate, to go from place to place doing good, to preach the goſpel to the poor — ſee his only occupation! His miracles were not leſs acts of power than of bounty. He converſed with ſinners, and invited them to repentance. He healed their bodies to perfect a better cure upon their minds. His love embraced all; Samaritan, Jew, infidel, and believer. Diſſembling hypocrites only obtained from him the ſeverity of cenſure.

He was mild, and ready to pardon: When his diſciples would have cauſed fire to fall down upon a village which refuſed to receive him, he repreſſed their rage, and ſaid, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* He was moved with compaſſion, and ſhed melting drops of pity over the ungrateful Jeruſalem. He kiſſed the traytor Judas, to make him reflect upon himſelf — a traytor, who would not be moved by ſuch behaviour! No complaints or invectives were heard from him againſt his judges: ſilent when the ſoldiers treated him ſhamefully, he ſuffered

fered himself to be *led as a lamb to the slaughter*. Without complaint he endured a dolorous punishment; with his last breath praying for his inhuman murderers!

Yet was he not insensible: he felt all the injustice and barbarity of his enemies; *My Father! if it be possible let this cup pass from me.* — He did not brave death: he resigned himself to it. He endeavoured not with proud courage to save himself from ignominy: he died with humility, submitting himself to the will of GOD: he died with love, regarding the good which his death was to procure for men. The more we reflect upon the circumstances of his death, the more we discern every character of humble innocence joined with true magnanimity; and, to speak humanly, without any regard to the sentiments which faith inspires, "nothing so "grand and beautiful, so sublime and affect-"ing, was ever seen, as the death of JESUS "CHRIST."

The doctrine of CHRIST, and the preparation for his coming.

§. IV. If we pass to his doctrine,—what wisdom, what holiness, what sublimity! All is worthy the most exalted reason, and the

the ſoundeſt philoſophy. All is proportioned to the miſeries and the excellence of man. Nothing is equal to the goodneſs of his miniſtry. He declared that he came to deliver men from death eternal, to make them of enemies, children of GOD; to open to them the doors of heaven, and to inſure them the poſſeſſion. He brought to them the knowledge of ſalvation, and the doctrine of truth. He nouriſhed us from his own body; he waſhed us from the defilement of our ſins, by applying to us the price of his own blood. In one word, he aſſured us, that he is our way, our truth, our life, our righteouſneſs, our redemption: — "Happy they who ſo "embrace and receive him."

But if his life, and his doctrine, prove his divinity to us, all that which preceded permits us not to doubt of it. Indeed he was foretold and promiſed to mankind from the very beginning of the world. From the moment Adam fell, he was declared the future Redeemer. Through all the following ages, GOD, if we may be allowed the expreſſion, appeared chiefly employed in preparing men for his coming. The circum-

ſtances

ſtances by which JESUS CHRIST was foretold, are again more wonderful even than the predictions themſelves. He was foretold by an whole people, ſeparated for that end by GOD from the reſt of the world; announced, during the ſpace of four thouſand years, by a long train of prophets, figured out by all the ceremonies of the law, expected by all the juſt, and ſhewn afar off, throughout all ages. This mighty preparation was not for any particular or private event: it was to introduce the bleſſed reſource of a fallen and condemned world, the ſalvation of Iſrael, the legiſlator of all people, the light of all nations.

To the celebrity of the prophecies add that of his miracles and mighty works, and you will ſee that his divinity ſhines alike brightly throughout all. We may obſerve, that in the ages preceding there appeared upon earth extraordinary men, whom the LORD ſeems to have made depoſitaries of his virtue and omnipotence; but when we accurately conſider them, all theſe diſtinguiſhed perſons carry with them, even in their very power, the marks of dependance and weakneſs.

weakneſs. JESUS CHRIST, on the contrary, performed all his grand and aſtoniſhing works with an omnipotent facility, and a ſovereign independance.

§. V. But further, can any one caſt his eyes upon the wonderful circumſtances of the life of CHRIST, without being dazzled with that ſplendor of divinity which accompanies them? Conceived by the operation of the moſt High, he is born of a pure virgin: ſcarcely is he born, but the angelic hoſts make the air reſound with ſongs of Joy, and inform us, that this birth brings glory to GOD, and peace to men. Soon after, a new ſtar conducts to his humble cradle wiſe men from the utmoſt parts of the eaſt; a juſt and holy woman prophetically declares in the temple the ſacred infant's future greatneſs: the aſſembled doctors behold with ſurprize his infancy more ſage and intelligent than the wiſdom of ancient men. In proportion, as he advances in age, his glory unfolds itſelf; John the Baptiſt (the greateſt of thoſe born of women) humbles himſelf before him; heaven opens over his head; the Almighty Father pronounces him his well-

The life and death of JESUS CHRIST.

well-beloved Son, and propoſes him as the living and eternal Law, commanding all men to hearken to his inſtructions. If from *Tabor* we paſs on to *Calvary*, that place where he was to complete all the ignominy of the ſon of man, becomes the theatre of his honour: all nature, in diſorder, acknowledges him there her author, and confeſſes his divinity: three days after he riſes from the dead, not by any extraneous power, nor to die again like other men; but through his own might, and from henceforth to poſſeſs a life immortal. Finally, he aſcends to heaven — no chariot of fire, in a moment, tranſports him from view; he raiſes himſelf with majeſty; the angels go in triumph before him, angels which promiſe him again to the earth, ſurrounded with glory, and all the dreadful pomp of future and tremendous judgment!

Now, who can fail to diſcern in theſe brief and imperfect traces, the GOD of heaven, — the GOD who, after having converſed with men, to reſcue them from their error and miſery, departs, to reaſſume the poſſeſſion of his glory? Can we make the ſmalleſt

ſmalleſt reflexion upon this ſhort ſketch of the God-man, the adorable Emmanuel, without repeating with pleaſure, and with much confidence, thoſe fine words of Rouſſeau, "If the life and death of Socrates are "thoſe of a ſage, the life and death of JESUS "are thoſe of a GOD: — his goſpel hath "marks of truth, ſo grand, ſo ſtriking, ſo "perfectly inimitable, that the inventor "would be a more aſtoniſhing character "than the hero." Eloquent words, which one cannot repeat without having at the ſame time a horror at the ſcepticiſm, which immediately follows them, and at the contradictions which are inſeparable from it.

§. VI. But further let us remark, that as the maſters were different, ſo were the ſcholars: from whom, by the way, further arguments may be deduced in proof of the ſuperlative excellence of the Religion of CHRIST. Socrates, it is true, had many for his diſciples and followers; ſome who have done him the higheſt credit: but not one amongſt them, who was willing to die for his maſter, and in atteſtation of the truths he taught. Mark the mighty differ-

The diſciples of CHRIST and Socrates.

ence! JESUS had for his disciples those who maintained his principles even unto death: those who could not be suppressed by all the threats, and all the punishments of men, nor detained by the strong prejudices wherein they had been brought up. Nor were those the immediate followers of CHRIST; the eye-witnesses only of his power and goodness. This testimony continued to be given through successive ages — given, not by the mean and the unlearned only, but by men of the first credit, and the first abilities — the Ignatiuses, the Polycarps, the Justins, the Irenæuses, the Cyprians, men of as much knowledge as virtue, are reckoned among the martyrs of JESUS CHRIST. They bordered several of them upon the apostolic times, and consequently were well able to inform themselves of the truth of that which they so solemnly and forcibly attested. They did not ignorantly incur these sufferings; they were fully assured of them; they were clearly informed of them, and embraced the christian faith with a clear foresight and full expectation of them. Their constancy and firmness in suffering cannot be attributed to vanity, interest, or the principles of education; and

and their conſent to ſuffer for their Religion was too conſiſtent, firm, and general, to be regarded as the effect of madneſs or enthuſiaſm. Their whole behaviour was regular, ſober, rational. It was GOD alone who ſuſtained, and it was only GOD who could ſuſtain them in the midſt of ſuch trying conflicts: they followed not the weakneſs of human reaſon, but the unſpeakable power of the Almighty; and therefore they conquered.

"Who, ſaid Tertullian, can conſider this "wonderful patience of the martyrs, with- "out ſerious reflexion, and a deſire to be in- "formed of the motive which produced "it?" It is manifeſt that the infinitely wiſe deſign of GOD, in inſpiring this generous contempt of life, was not only to prove to what degree Chriſtianity was divine, by the conſtancy and patience which it inculcated; but alſo to lead the Pagans, by a method almoſt infallible, to the examination of a doctrine which excited ſentiments ſo ſuperior to nature. This admirable deſign was anſwered. The moſt obſtinately ſtubborn ſaw, and were ſurprized; examined, and were con-

vinced; and were no ſooner convinced than they themſelves became confeſſors; and ſhortly, many of them martyrs for the truth.

If the apoſtles and followers of JESUS CHRIST had only become hardy, ſo far as to deſpiſe death; men might have taken this courage for fanaticiſm, when they could diſcern in them neither wiſdom nor diſcretion. If the apoſtles and followers of JESUS CHRIST had only made uſe of fine ſpeeches, and elegant diſcourſes, without conſtancy and firmneſs in ſuffering, men would have looked upon their weakneſs as a contradiction to their doctrine. But, when they ſaw thoſe, who, at the firſt, were timid, ignorant, bred up in prejudices, aſſume, on a ſudden, a character exalted, judicious, pathetic; recommend a virtue, ſtrict, pure, and refined; recommend it beſt by their own practice, when they ſaw them ſacrifice all their deareſt temporal intereſts to bring men to the like perſuaſion, of which all the fruit to themſelves was, to make their converts triumph in the worſhip of the true GOD, in juſtice, charity, and temperance — when they

they ſaw this; they muſt be led to confeſs, as indeed they did confeſs, "that theſe men "indiſputably were actuated by a divine "principle."

§. VII. "But there have been falſe mar- Martyrs.
"tyrs, — martyrs of error." — It is very true; but let it be always noted, that the errors of the falſe martyrs were not *palpable facts*, but ideas; ſyſtems of their own invention, to which an opinionative vanity ſometimes attaches invincibly. The chriſtian martyrs were in a very different ſituation. For they maintained, not their own doctrine, not any ſyſtem of their own invention, but the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST himſelf, countenanced and ſtrengthened by miracles. The whole turned upon facts, plain matters of fact, in which they could not but be well informed. They all atteſted; they all died in atteſtation and ſupport of the ſame facts. Now there is no natural reaſon to be prejudiced in favour of facts, ſo as to abandon the moſt important ſelf-intereſt. They maintained that JESUS CHRIST had taught ſuch and ſuch doctrines; had performed ſuch and ſuch mighty works. A

teſtimony of this kind given even in death, and death the moſt formidable, given to facts in which they had no part, — could not be ſuggeſted by vain glory; or, to ſpeak more properly, it offers nothing which doth not command aſſent and approbation. So that the famous Paſcal might well ſay of the martyrs, "I freely believe with them "thoſe evidences which cauſed their death." Enthuſiaſm we know may do much; but then it muſt be in matters of fancy and imagination: in thoſe of ſenſe and fact it's power is ſmall, and hath never been known to influence more than one or two at a time to believe they ſaw that which they did not ſee. The argument, therefore, muſt be very weak, which founds itſelf on a ſuppoſition, that ſo great a number of perſons as have readily given up their lives in the chriſtian cauſe, who in all other reſpects were worthy, ſober, and rational,—that ſo great a number ſhould imagine they had ſeen a dead man raiſed to life, or any other extraordinary miracle, when in reality no ſuch fact had ever been preſented to their eyes.

Thus

Thus the followers of Chriſtianity, who voluntarily reſigned their lives in teſtimony of the faith, afford us a ſtrong evidence of it's truth and divinity, without a belief of which we can never account for their enduring ſuch ſufferings in ſo triumphant and heroical a manner. This atteſtation is moſt ſtriking, and worthy of all attention. "Let "any one, ſays a celebrated writer, calmly "lay his hand upon his heart, and, after "reading the terrible conflicts in which the "ancient martyrs and confeſſors were en-"gaged, when they paſſed through ſuch "new inventions and varieties of pain as "tired their tormentors; and aſk himſelf, "however zealous and ſincere he is in his "Religion, whether under ſuch acute and "lingering tortures, he could ſtill have held "faſt his integrity, and have profeſſed his "faith to the laſt, without a ſupernatural "aſſiſtance of ſome kind or other? For "my part, when I conſider that it was not "an unaccountable obſtinacy in a ſingle "man, or in any particular ſet of men, in "ſome extraordinary juncture; but that "there were multitudes of each ſex, of

" every age, of different countries and con-
" ditions, who, for near three hundred
" years together, made that glorious con-
" feſſion of their faith, in the midſt of tor-
" tures, and in the hour of death; I muſt
" conclude, that they were either of ano-
" ther make than men are at preſent, or
" that they had ſuch miraculous ſupports
" as were peculiar to thoſe times of Chriſti-
" anity, when without them, perhaps, the
" very nature of it might have been extin-
" guiſhed." — While it is evident, that theſe ſupernatural ſupports afford the fulleſt proofs of the Chriſtian Religion.

He proceeds, " It is certain, that the
" deaths and ſufferings of the primitive
" Chriſtians had a great ſhare in the con-
" verſion of thoſe learned Pagans, who
" lived in the ages of perſecution. They
" themſelves, many of them, tell us, that
" this firſt of all alarmed their curioſity,
" rouſed their attention, and made them ſe-
" rioufly inquiſitive into the nature of that
" Religion which would indue the mind
" with ſo much ſtrength, and overcome
" the fear of death, nay raiſe in them an

" earneſt

" earneſt deſire of it, though it appeared in " all it's terrors. This they found had not " been effected by all the doctrine of thoſe " philoſophers whom they had thoroughly " ſtudied, and who had been labouring at " this great point. The ſight of theſe dy- " ing and tormented martyrs, engaged them " to ſearch into the hiſtory and doctrine of " him for whom they ſuffered. The more " they ſearched, the more they were con- " vinced; till their conviction grew ſo " ſtrong that they themſelves embraced the " ſame truths, and either actually laid down " their lives, or were always in a readi- " neſs to do it, rather than depart from " them *."

Thus, then, JESUS CHRIST triumphs over all the philoſophers and ſages, all the brighteſt characters of the Pagan world, as well by the lives and deaths of his immediate diſciples and followers, as by his own immediate example, — nor can any other character, however worthy in itſelf, be drawn into compariſon with him, without

* See Mr. Addiſon's Evidences, p. 60.

ſhewing

ſhewing in a moment how infinitely ſhort all human merit falls of the perfection of the Son of GOD. Admit him to have been the Son of GOD, and this will appear nothing extraordinary: deny him to have been the Son of GOD, and it is utterly unaccountable, beyond the ſolution of the acuteſt reaſoner, or ſubtleſt deiſt upon earth, that a man born, or bred, like JESUS CHRIST, ſhould, in ſuch a country, and at ſuch an early period of life, not only outſhine by the luſtre of his virtues all the wiſeſt and beſt men in every part of the globe; but by the purity of his doctrine ſhould excel all that the united wiſdom of man had ever taught or enforced.

Evidences to the truth of Chriſtianity from the character of CHRIST.

§. VIII. We before obſerved, that a ſtrong evidence ariſes in proof of the divinity of the Chriſtian Religion, from the moral character, the life and death of JESUS CHRIST. From the foregoing remark it was evident. — Let us purſue the ſubject a little further.

If we allow only the truth of the common hiſtory of the New Teſtament, or even without having recourſe to it, only ſuch

ſuch a part of the character of CHRIST, as neither ancient nor modern Jews, heathens, or unbelievers, ſeem to conteſt only ſuch a part of the character as the ſceptical Rouſſeau himſelf gives in the paſſage before quoted: and it will be difficult, might we not ſay it will be impoſſible, to reconcile ſo great a character, claiming divine authority, and an immediate miſſion from heaven, either with the moral attributes of GOD, or indeed with itſelf, upon the ſuppoſition of the falſhood of that claim. It is not to be conceived that the Father of mankind, the Almighty GOD, would permit a perſon, apparently ſo innocent, and excellent, ſo qualified to impoſe upon mankind, to make ſo impious and audacious a claim, without having ſome evident mark of impoſture ſet upon him. Nor can it, on the other hand, be imagined how a perſon could be apparently ſo innocent and excellent, conſiſtently ſo in life and in death, and yet at the ſame time an infamous impoſture. To believe this would be to believe that light and darkneſs could exiſt together; would be to believe the union of the verieſt contradictions in nature. It follows, therefore, from hence, that JESUS

CHRIST

CHRIST muſt have been what we ſincerely believe him, the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of the world.

Let us again obſerve, that, laying down the preſent diſorder of the moral world, and the neceſſity of the love of GOD, and of our neighbour, as well as of ſelf-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate happineſs of man, there ſeems to be a neceſſity alſo for a ſuffering Saviour. At leaſt it may be affirmed, that the condeſcenſion of JESUS CHRIST in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in ſhewing himſelf a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of GOD, both in doing and ſuffering, has a moſt peculiar tendency to rectify the preſent moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure and ſpiritual happineſs. Now it is very remarkable, that the evangeliſts and apoſtles, the hiſtorians of JESUS CHRIST ſhould have thus hit upon a thing which all the greateſt men among the heathens miſſed, and which however clear it does, and ought now to, appear to us, was a great ſtumbling block to them, as well as to the Jews;

Jews; the firſt *ſeeking after wiſdom*; that is human philoſophy and eloquence; and the laſt requiring a ſign, or a glorious temporal Saviour. This again can no otherwiſe be accounted for, than by admitting the reality of the character, that is the divine miſſion of CHRIST, and the conſequent divine inſpiration of thoſe who drew it; i. e. the truth and divine authority of the New Teſtament. Indeed it ought here to be particularly remarked, that our Saviour's intire devotion to GOD, and ſuffering for the ſake of men, in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never propoſed, or thought of, before his coming, much leſs attempted or attained.

The manner in which the evangeliſts ſpeak of CHRIST clearly ſhews, that they drew after a real copy, and conſequently proves the genuineneſs and truth of the goſpel hiſtory. There are no direct encomiums upon it, no laboured defences, or recommendations. His character ariſes from a careful impartial examination of all he ſaid and did; and the evangeliſts appear to have drawn this greateſt of all characters without

any

any direct design to do it. Nay, they have recorded some things, such as his being moved with the passions of human nature, as well as being affected by it's infirmities, which the wisdom of this world would rather have concealed. But their view was, to shew him to the people to whom they preached, as the promised Messiah of the Jews, and the Saviour of mankind; and as they had been convinced of this themselves from his discourses, actions, sufferings, and resurrection, they thought nothing more was wanting to convince such others as were serious and impartial; but a simple narrative of what JESUS said and did. Now, if we compare the transcendent greatness of this character with the indirect manner in which it is delivered, and the illiterateness and low condition of the evangelists, it will appear impossible that they should not have had a real original before them; so that nothing was wanting but to record simply and faithfully. How could mean and illiterate persons excel the greatest geniuses, ancient and modern, in drawing a character? — How came they to draw it in an indirect manner? This is without a question, one of the strongest

ſtrongeſt evidences of genuineneſs and truth.

The character of CHRIST, therefore, as drawn by them, is genuine and true, — and conſequently proves his divine miſſion, both by it's ſuperlative excellence, and by his laying claim to ſuch a miſſion *.

DISSERTATION VI.

The CHRISTIAN, MAHOMMEDAN, and JEWISH RELIGIONS compared, with a View of the PROPHECIES.

§. I. " IN Europe, ſays Rouſſeau, we " have three principal Religions " One admits only of one revelation, ano- " ther of two, and the third of three. Each " holds the others in deteſtation, anathema- " tizes their profeſſors, and accuſes them of " ignorance, obſtinacy, and falſhood. What " impartial perſon will preſume to decide " between them, without having firſt exa- " mined their proofs, and heard their rea- " ſons? That which admits only of one

The argument ſtated, and Rouſſeau's inconſiſtency ſhewn.

* See Hartley's Obſervations on Man, Vol. II.

" revelation

" revelation is the moſt ancient, and ſeems " the leaſt diſputable; that which admits " of three is the moſt modern, and ſeems " to be the moſt conſiſtent; that which " admits of two, and rejects the third, " may poſſibly be the beſt; but it hath " certainly every prepoſſeſſion againſt it: " it's inconſiſtency ſtares one full in the " face."

Thus labours Rouſſeau to overthrow theſe three Religions, by oppoſing the one againſt the other. He grants antiquity in favour of the firſt, and repreſents it as the moſt indiſputable. The ſecond, which is moſt modern, he agrees, is the moſt conſiſtent. As for the third, he has the grace to ſay that it may poſſibly be the beſt; but then he affirms, that it has every prejudice againſt it; and that it's inconſiſtency is too obvious to be overlooked.

This being the caſe; proceed we to ſhew in the ſubſequent Diſſertation, that what appears thus obvious is not the inconſiſtency of the Chriſtian Religion, but of Rouſſeau himſelf.

Now

Now let us aſk, How it is poſſible, if the firſt Religion ſeems to be the *moſt indiſputable*, that the ſecond can appear to be the *moſt conſiſtent?* And how can the third be poſſibly the *beſt*, *if it hath every prepoſſeſſion againſt it*, *and if it's inconſiſtency ſtares us full in the face?*

The end which this writer has in view ſeems to be the deſtruction of all Religion whatſoever. He deſires to ſhow no more favour to one than the other; and he therefore ſubtily avails himſelf of one for the demoliſhing the reſt. Thus, his ſaying the firſt ſeems the leaſt diſputable, and the ſecond moſt conſiſtent, is nothing more than ambiguouſly to aſſert, that they are neither of them indiſputable or conſiſtent; and his declaring that the third may poſſibly be the beſt, but that it hath every prepoſſeſſion againſt it; and that it's inconſiſtency is glaringly obvious; is as much as to ſay, that it is the worſt of all: and, conſequently, that all of them ought to be rejected.

To defeat theſe frivolous cavils: It ſhall be our buſineſs to prove to Rouſſeau, That *the* CHRISTIAN *Religion is the moſt ancient of all Religions:* — That *it is the moſt indiſputable, and the moſt conſiſtent:* and that ſo very far from having every prepoſſeſſion againſt it; it has them all in it's favour. We will ſhew him, that the JEWISH *Religion*, ſuch as it is at this day, is neither the moſt ancient, nor the moſt indiſputable: and that the *Religion of* MAHOMET, very far from being the moſt conſiſtent, is, on the contrary, a glaring inconſiſtency throughout, and hath every prepoſſeſſion againſt it.

The Mahometan Religion examined and compared with the Chriſtian.

§. II. Let us begin with this laſt propoſition: and ſurely every reaſonable man will agree with us in obſerving, that it adds luſtre to the divinity of the Religion of JESUS CHRIST, to place it in competition with the Religion of Mahomet the impoſtor. The beauty and ſanctity of the Chriſtian Religion will appear to a ſtill greater advantage, when contraſted with the deformity, obſcurity, and ſenſuality of that of Mahomet.

JESUS

JESUS CHRIST comes into the world; he proves, by every circumſtance of his life, that he is the Meſſiah, that great prophet promiſed by Moſes, and foretold by all the prophets: he gives teſtimony of what he is, and of the divinity of his miſſion, by an infinite multitude of miracles: he adds to them a conſiderable number of prophecies, which have all been exactly accompliſhed. What figure will Mahomet make in this view? Where are his miracles? Where are his prophecies? In which book of the ſcriptures was he foretold, unleſs he be one of thoſe groſs impoſtures whoſe ſnares and ſeductions they recommend to us to avoid? Mahomet has not been able to ſhew, either in his perſon or Religion, any real or apparent correſpondence with paſt ages: nothing further is neceſſary to induce us to reject him; becauſe, as we ſhall ſhow, every ſect which cannot trace it's deſcent from the beginning of the world, cannot come from GOD? The expedient which Mahomet hath hit upon, in order to conceal the defect of his innovation, is one of the moſt ſingular imaginable. Having reaſon to fear that no teſti-

monies of his miſſion could be traced out in the ſcriptures of the Chriſtians like thoſe to which JESUS CHRIST could refer in the books of the Jews. He has advanced, that both Chriſtians and Jews have mutilated and falſified all their books: but he has not offered the leaſt ſhadow of proof. It was neceſſary that his perſon ſhould be foretold in the ſcriptures. It is, nevertheleſs, moſt certain that it was not foretold. They, therefore, according to Mahomet, are forged, and contrary to all probability, his ignorant followers, have believed upon his word that the fact is ſo.

But ought not Mahomet, at leaſt, if he wiſhed to eſtabliſh a new Religion, to have juſtified his pretended warrant and miſſion, by ſome miracle? He not only fails to perform any ſuch; but he does not even boaſt the power to perform them; nor have his diſciples ever ventured to attribute ſuch a power to him. He perſuades his wife, and his followers, that the agitations into which he was frequently thrown, were a ſeries of uſual communications which he held with the angel Gabriel. But what proof does he

give

give that they were ſo? Were his agitations and extaſies a proof in themſelves? How many impoſtors have done as much.

Mahomet pronounces his own condemnation, and proves to us the inconſiſtency of his Religion. He acknowledges Moſes as the meſſenger of GOD: he declares the ſame of JESUS CHRIST: he always ſpeaks of Him with great reſpect: he prefers him to all the prophets: he calls him The Word of GOD: His Power, His Wiſdom, His Mind: and he acknowledges, that his diſciples were holy perſonages. Mahomet then is an impoſtor and a cheat; ſince he promulges a doctrine diametrically oppoſite to that of Moſes and the apoſtles; ſince he endeavours to ſubvert that Religion which JESUS CHRIST the meſſenger of GOD, hath eſtabliſhed; and ſince he rejects that doctrine which JESUS CHRIST hath preached to mankind, in order to ſubſtitute a new one, without any ſanction, and deſtitute of any proof of the miſſion which he arrogates.

How blind muſt he be who can venture to compare JESUS CHRIST and his Reli-

gion with Mahomet; and the doctrine which he hath founded! *Mahomet* is a pander, a robber, a miſcreant, who leads a life the moſt corrupt, and the moſt licentious. The whole life of JESUS CHRIST is the moſt pure, and the moſt irreproachable. He comes to combat every vice, and to ſuppreſs every irregularity: his morality in every particular bears the ſtamp of his divine nature. He therefore has no fear, in expoſing his conduct to the ſcrutinizing view of the moſt clear ſighted: he conceals nothing: he publicly declares whatever he would utter: he would have the whole world underſtand what he teaches: he commands his diſciples to proclaim upon the houſe top whatever they may have learned from him privately within the houſe. After his reſurrection, he cauſes that doctrine which he had laid down as the baſis of his Religion, to de depoſited in authenticated books of record; and requires that theſe books be put into the hands of all the world; exhorting all mankind to read them. But how very different a conduct is that of *Mahomet!* He foreſaw the whole horrid nature of his doctrine: he was even aſhamed of it himſelf; and

and therefore he deſired it to be buried in the obſcurity of a profound ignorance. A political ſilence and ſecrecy which this legiſlator preſcribed, have been employed to conceal the abſurdities of his tenets. He prohibits the reading of his books, for fear his terrified followers ſhould riſe up to oppoſe ſo repugnant a doctrine, and open their eyes to the deluſions of their ſeducer.

Who, indeed, can ſupport the peruſal of a doctrine ſo horrible as that of Mahomet? To ſtop only at a ſingle inſtance, which is the baſis of all the reſt. Is not one ſtruck with horror, on obſerving that infamous beatitude which Mahomet propoſes to his followers as the object of their hopes? Nothing is more important or eſſential in a Religion, than clearly to ſpecify what is that recompence which it enſures, as the term of all the duties it preſcribes: — ſaying, ſuch is the end; ſuch are the means: — Now what is more impious, what more deteſtable than the end and beatitude of Mahomet's Religion? A chaſte tongue dares not ſpeak of them, chaſte ears cannot apprehend them. We muſt become as ſenſual as beaſts

to reliſh them ; and as debauched as devils to approve them. The GOD who could promiſe ſuch a beatitude, would only deſerve the execration of mankind.

What an inexpreſſible difference between that beatitude and recompenſe, which is promiſed by JESUS CHRIST to his diſciples? The happineſs which the latter enſures to his diſciples after this life, conſiſts in a full and perfect enjoyment of that GOD whom they have ſerved here below. All their occupation in the manſion of glory ſhall be to praiſe him, to adore him, and to contemplate his infinite perfections: made like the angels, they ſhall no longer be allured by the ſeductions of concupiſcence: all within them ſhall be in perfect harmony: nor ſhall they covet any other pleaſures than inceſſantly to cheriſh in their ſouls the conſolations and graces of immortal truth. Their hearts will be abſorbed in the torrent of thoſe delights, which it ſhall continually afford them: always contented, always ſatisfied, without ever being ſatiated: they ſhall everlaſtingly imbibe new pleaſures from the holy tranſports of their love.

Such

Such are the great objects which Chriſtianity propoſes, and which are all worthy the purity, the excellence, the divinity of ſuch a Religion. The paradiſe of Mahomet, on the contrary, is a paradiſe of fleſh and blood, of voluptuouſneſs and debauchery. Men are there to be only employed in gratifying the moſt corrupt deſires. All their delights are to conſiſt in plunging themſelves amidſt the moſt impure indulgencies; moſt unworthy the ſanctity of GOD, and the excellence of the human nature.

Which now of theſe two doctrines bears the ſacred characters of divinity? — Will *Rouſſeau* be daring enough to aſſert that Mahomet's can proceed from GOD? That Rouſſeau, who very rationally requires, that *ſuch a doctrine*, as a proof of that divine original, *ſhould bear the ſacred characters of the divinity*; and that it *ſhould alſo furniſh us with a ſyſtem of Religion and morality, ſuitable to thoſe attributes by which only we form a conception of his eſſence.* Since then the Religion of Mahomet *teaches us ſuch things only as are abſurd and irrational,* I ſhall ſay

ſo

to his followers, after Rouſſeau, "*Your God* "*is not our God* *."

An enquiry into the manner in which the Mahometan and Chriſtian Religion were propagated.

§. III. If, again, we conſider the manner in which JESUS CHRIST eſtabliſhed his Religion, and compare it with the means made uſe of by Mahomet for the founding and extending of his own; how aſtoniſhing is the contraſt! All is divine and inimitable on the ſide of JESUS CHRIST: all human and diabolical on the part of Mahomet. JESUS CHRIST lays the foundations of his Religion in the power of his miracles, and the virtue of his ſufferings. Humility, gentleneſs, and patience, pave the way for his goſpel: he endeavours but to perſuade: twelve poor men, ignorant, illiterate, and unarmed, form his whole train of followers: he only inſpires his diſciples with humility, a love of ſufferings, a contempt of the world, and a flight from it's pomps and vanities; union, peace, and a ſubmiſſion to all who are in authority. — He attacks all the prejudices of fleſh and blood; and oppoſes man in all that his carnal nature holds moſt dear;

* Tom. iii. p. 148, 149.

he

he preaches to him nothing but the denial of himſelf; and promiſes him nothing in his preſent ſtate, but croſſes and tribulations. What ſublimity, what auſterity in his morality! How grating to thoſe hearts, who, till then, never knew any thing but to indulge their paſſions; and who lived only to gratify every irregular propenſity of a corrupt nature! Yet nevertheleſs, with ſuch a doctrine he undertakes, by the miniſtry of his apoſtles, the converſion of the whole univerſe; and ſends them forth as lambs in the midſt of wolves, amongſt adverſaries of every kind, inſtigated and armed to oppoſe them. They everywhere meet with reſiſtance and contradiction; and yet theſe men, men of *no reputation*, unaided by the leaſt human protection or ſupport; by means of their invincible patience, inexpreſſible ſufferings, and indefatigable labours; bring about their divine Maſter's purpoſe, form a multitude of Chriſtians; and extend on every ſide, the doctrine of the goſpel, and faith in the name of JESUS CHRIST. The ſame means which were employed to eſtabliſh this Religion, contribute ſtill as well to it's defence, as to it's advancement. The more it

is

is hated, the more it multiplies. The death of millions of martyrs, who poured out their blood in it's cauſe, ſerve but to increaſe and render it the more illuſtrious: perſecutions and ſufferings, which were ere while it's *cradle*, become it's ſtrength and bulwalk; and by theſe it triumphs over all it's enemies, leagued together to effect it's deſtruction.

But Mahomet adopts quite another conduct: his actions are thoſe of a mere man; he does no more than what the moſt flagitious of men had done before him? Nor is there a ſkilful impoſture who may not imitate him in every particular: he plants his ſect with fire and ſword in hand: his ſoldiers are his apoſtles! and force and violence the means he makes uſe of to work perſuaſion. He converts nations, by killing thoſe who oppoſe him: he deceives people who are moſt profoundly ignorant: he takes advantage of the diviſions in his neighbourhood, to extend, by force of arms, a Religion, wholly ſenſual: he brings men over by ſoothing their paſſions, and ſeduces them, by propoſing nothing which is contrary to their luſtful inclinations. In ſhort, his doctrine

trine encourages almoſt every licentious propenſity. What is there marvellous in all this behaviour? — We behold throughout the triumph of violence and craft, of luſt and the paſſions. The whole conduct of JESUS CHRIST, on the contrary, only preſents to our view the triumph of charity, of patience, and every other virtue.

Of the ſucceſs of the Mahometan Religion.

§. IV. The ſtrongeſt argument which Mahomet can bring in defence of his ſect, is the ſucceſs of his arms, and the wide extent of his empire. But what is there extraordinary in that, or more than human? Is not Alexander the Great, who, in the compaſs of a dozen years, made himſelf maſter of half the globe, beyond compariſon a more admirable perſon than Mahomet in that progreſs, which his ſect made in a much longer ſpace of time? And had not the *Romans*, who, as they became maſters of the greateſt part of the univerſe, extended, with their conqueſts, the worſhip of their Gods; had not they as much right as Mahomet to conclude, from the progreſs and rapidity of their conqueſts, the divinity of their Religion, and of the Gods whom they worſhipped?

ed? There is nothing, therefore, ſurpriſing in the eſtabliſhment of the Mahometan Religion, ſince it gained an introduction only through the means of violence, ignorance, and luſt. It is nothing ſtrange that human cauſes ſhould produce an human effect, which is ſo well adapted to them: but in the progreſs and eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion, all is wonderful and aſtoniſhing! In ſhort, theſe two Religions are ſo eſſentially different in every reſpect, that no unprejudiced perſon can heſitate to join the celebrated Paſcal, in his juſt obſervation, that "If Mahomet, humanly ſpeaking, took the "way to ſucceed, JESUS CHRIST, humanly "ſpeaking, took the way to periſh; and, "inſtead of concluding that, becauſe Ma"homet ſucceeded, JESUS CHRIST ought "in like manner to have ſucceeded; we "ought to ſay, that ſince Mahomet ſuc"ceeded, Chriſtianity muſt inevitably have "periſhed, had it not been ſupported by a "a power altogether divine."

Rouſſeau refuted, and the Chriſtian vindicated.

§. V. Can any one after this, without indignation and horror, hear Rouſſeau expreſs himſelf as follows: "At Conſtanti"nople

" nople the Turks make known their rea-
" ſons; but we dare not publiſh ours: there
" it is our turn to ſubmit. If the Turks
" require us to pay to Mahomet, in whom
" we do not believe, the ſame reſpect which
" we require the Jews to pay to JESUS
" CHRIST, in whom they believe as little:
" Can the Turks be in the wrong, and we
" in the right? On what principle of equity
" can we reſolve the queſtion in our own
" favour?"

He is not a true Chriſtian who ſubmits at Conſtantinople, or any where elſe. Every true Chriſtian is always ready to give an account of his faith wherever he may be. To diſſemble would be to betray it. For a Chriſtian to conceal his Religion is ſacrilege: he ought to be ever diſpoſed to confeſs him whom he adores; nor can he bluſh to do ſo, without renouncing his profeſſion; and why ſhould he be fearful to give a reaſon for his embracing that faith which is built on ſuch ſolid foundations? How little does Rouſſeau underſtand the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity? Were the Chriſtians, who formerly lived amongſt the Pagans, aſhamed to avow and main-

maintain their profeſſion. Did they not offer their reaſons, with an undaunted fortitude, in many glorious apologies, in crouded tribunals, at the feet of Judges, and of emperors. Did they not publiſh them with an unſhaken courage and conſtancy, in the midſt of moſt terrible torments, and puniſhments the moſt inhuman? "We openly declare it, "cried Tertullian, we ſpeak it in the face "of all mankind, and amidſt the moſt fear- "ful tortures, with bodies torn to pieces, "and ſtreaming with blood, and with all "the powers of our ſouls, we proclaim that "we adore GOD through CHRIST." Every Chriſtian who is not diſpoſed to imitate theſe illuſtrious examples of faith in our forefathers, and can ſubmit at Conſtantinople; from thenceforward ceaſes to be a true Chriſtian, and is unworthy of the name he bears. But can Rouſſeau be ignorant, that a multitude of Chriſtians have freely acknowledged JESUS CHRIST, and given up their lives in his cauſe, as well amongſt the Turks as amongſt the Heathens.

Whatever we have been hitherto advancing in ſupport of the Chriſtian Religion, and the

the proofs we have offered of the falſhood of that eſtabliſhed by Mahomet; all theſe arguments fully anſwer the inſidious queſtion propounded by Rouſſeau. It is clear, that the Turks have no right to *require us to pay to Mahomet, in whom we do not believe, the ſame reſpect which we require the Jews to pay to* JESUS CHRIST, *in whom they believe as little.* Muſt not he labour under the groſſeſt ignorance, to aſk us, Can the Turks be in the wrong, and we in the right? On what equitable principle ſhall we reſolve this queſtion? I, on my part, will beg to aſk Rouſſeau, on what principle of equity can he propoſe ſuch a queſtion? Do we need ſuch a one in order to reſolve it? What parity or reſemblance can Rouſſeau find, between two Religions ſo eſſentially diſproportionate? We do not claim a right to force the Jews to pay JESUS CHRIST the ſame reſpect with ourſelves, as the Mahometans do claim a right of exacting in favour of Mahomet. It is unworthy of the Chriſtian Religion to make uſe of violence, and to extort that faith which it requires. It is only eſtabliſhed by means of ſufferings and humility, of patience, and the ſtrength of it's arguments; and by ſuch means only

ought it to be maintained: all thoſe who employ any others, in order to extend it's authority, cannot be animated with the ſpirit of it's firſt founders; but would openly wound the very eſſence and principles of Chriſtianity.

Chriſtians have ſufficient proof to convince the Jews: ſome of them advanced: Chriſtian Religion moſt ancient.

§. VI. But then we, Chriſtians, do pretend to have deciſive arguments, and proofs of the fulleſt evidence, whereby to engage the Jews to pay to JESUS CHRIST that reſpect, worſhip, and adoration, which we ourſelves render him. And we alſo pretend to prove to them, that JESUS CHRIST is that Meſſiah whom their whole law hath figured out, and foretold: that Meſſiah, whom they have ever expected, and do ſtill wait for, but in vain: and laſtly, we pretend to demonſtrate to them, that the Chriſtian Religion is wholly founded upon the law and the prophets; and the ſame in point of ſubſtance with that of the Jews before the coming of CHRIST, and of the Patriarchs, juſt men, and ſaints, in all ages *of the world.*

It is eſſential to the true Religion, that it be as ancient as the world. GOD having created

created man, and formed him after his own image, did, without doubt, ſhew him, from the beginning, the true method how to ſerve, and to pleaſe him; ſo that every Religion which cannot trace back it's ſucceſſion up to the original of the world, cannot come from GOD: on the contrary, that Religion which compriſes the whole duration of time, hath certainly GOD for it's author. Now ſuch is the character of the *Chriſtian Religion.*

If JESUS CHRIST is the Meſſiah, announced by the prophets, it follows from thence that this Religion draws it's original from heaven, and is as ancient as the world; that it has ever exiſted, and that it has only a new name. This is the Religion of Adam, of all the ſaints before the law, of Abraham, of the other Patriarch, and of the whole nation of the Jews. All the children of GOD have ever believed that which we believe; hoped for that which we poſſeſs, and expected what we ſee. They were ſanctified by believing that the Meſſiah *would* come, as we ourſelves are, by the confidence that he *is* come. The ſame grace which was given by JESUS CHRIST to us,

was alſo communicated to them by his anticipated merits; all their views, and all their deſires, were directed towards this grand object. The whole Jewiſh diſpenſation was but the forerunner of this great advent. Their ſacrifices, their law, and their ceremonies, all tended to this one accompliſhment. Their ſole purpoſe was, to prepare the way for the MESSIAH, and to render a rude and unpoliſhed people ſenſible of myſteries too ſublime for their comprehenſion; they were as a veil under which he was concealed, and which diſappeared in proportion as he manifeſted himſelf: conſequently, if JESUS CHRIST be the MESSIAH, the Chriſtian Religion is as ancient as the world, ſince in all ages JESUS CHRIST, either expected or given, has been the object of hope and conſolation to all true worſhippers of GOD; ſince the ſame GOD has been always acknowledged as the principle of all things, and the ſame CHRIST as the reſtorer of the human race. JESUS CHRIST is the central bend which ſo unites the two people, as to make of them but one. The Religion of nature prepares the way for the law: the law precedes the goſpel: the ſucceſſion of Moſes

and

and the Patriarchs, makes but one and the ſame ſeries with that of JESUS CHRIST. It is a known token of the Meſſiah, that he be expected, that he come, and be acknowledged by a poſterity which may continue to the end of the world. *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

It will be ſufficient for us, therefore, to ſhow, that JESUS CHRIST is the true MESSIAH, in order to conclude at the ſame time that the Chriſtian Religion is the moſt ancient, and conſequently the only genuine Religion in the world. Let us examine, by the books of the Jews themſelves, what the characters of the MESSIAH ought to be, and we ſhall find that they perfectly agree in the perſon of JESUS CHRIST.

§. VII. In the firſt place, the *time and circumſtances of the Meſſiah's coming*, are deciſive in favour of JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST proved to be the *Meſſiah*, from a view of the *prophecies*.

The famous prophecy of Jacob, expreſly ſignifies, *that the ſceptre*, i. e. the authority, *ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver*

from between his feet, until SHILO, WHO MUST BE SENT, *ſhall come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.* Gen. xlix. 10. All the ancient Jews unanimouſly agree, that this prediction reſpects the Meſſiah, and moſt of the moderns think ſo too. But beſides this, the *terms* of the prophecy, clearly deſcribe the Meſſiah. It is evident that Jacob ſpeaks of him, who had been promiſed by his forefathers; him, who was to be the expectation of all nations, and in, and through whom they were to be bleſſed. The only queſtion, therefore, which remains, is, whether the Jews, and the tribe of Judah in particular, were, at the coming of CHRIST, and ſtill are, in the condition ſpecified by the prophecy *.

Now it is certain that the tribe of Judah, at the time when JESUS CHRIST firſt appeared in the world, had loſt it's pre-eminence, and that the Jews in general, no longer held the authority to govern themſelves by their own magiſtrates, inveſted with a power over life and death. They themſelves

* See Biſhop Sherlock's Diſſert. on that prophecy.

publicly

publicly avow it, when, on demanding of Pilate the execution of CHRIST, they declare that *it is not permitted them to put any one to death* * ; and by crying out, *we have no other king than Cæſar* ; they openly acknowledged JESUS CHRIST for the Meſſiah, ſince they had no longer a king or governor of their own nation, and even would have no other than the ſtranger, who governed them at that time.

In order to prevent every difficulty, it is of conſequence to remark, that in all other revolutions, which had happened to the people of the Jews, and notwithſtanding the various ſtates through which they had paſſed, they always kept together, however, as a regular body of people, and were always ſeen to have kings, or magiſtrates, or judges, of their own nation, for their government. But at the coming of JESUS CHRIST the kingdom of Judah falls into ruin, and is utterly aboliſhed, and the whole people of the Jews expelled from the land of their forefathers, without hope of return. Nor is

* John xviii. 31.

this extreme and dreadful desolation a mere transmigration like that of Babylon, nor a suspension only of the government and people of GOD: but it is an entire, an absolute extinction of every kind of rule or authority from amongst them; and, which is an unheard of instance, it lasts for 1700 years. JESUS CHRIST is therefore the Messiah.

While Daniel is employed in contemplating the captivity of his people at Babylon, and those seventy years to which GOD had determined to confine it's continuance, amidst the vows he offered up for the deliverance of his brethren; he is all on a sudden elevated to objects more important. Instead of the seventy *years*, foretold by Jeremiah, he discerns seventy weeks, which were to commence from the issuing of the edict of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, in the twentieth year of his reign, for the rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. On the conclusion of these weeks is fixed the *remission of sins*, the *eternal reign of justice*, the *entire accomplishment of prophecies*, and the *unction of the holy of holies*. That *after the sixty-nine first weeks Christ*

Chriſt ſhall appear, and publiſh his miſſion, and be put to death; a violent death. OCCIDETUR; BE CUT OFF. One week is diſtinguiſhed above all the reſt; this is the ſeventieth and laſt; that in which *Chriſt is to be ſacrificed*, in which *the covenant is to be confirmed*; and in the *midſt of which ſacrifice and oblations are to ceaſe*. After the Death of CHRIST, *the people which hath renounced him, is to be no more his people*; nothing is to be ſeen but horror and confuſion. *The city and the ſanctuary are deſtroyed*; *a foreign people with it's prince are ſent to demoliſh it entirely. For abomination is in the temple, and nothing but an univerſal deſolation can conclude the war.*

The weeks of Daniel, changed into weeks of years, according to the ſcripture method; and in like manner with the weeks of the Babyloniſh captivity, make together 490 years, which, from the time of the edict iſſued by Artaxerxes, brings us preciſely to the laſt week in which JESUS CHRIST exerciſed his public miniſtry; and wherein by his death he put an end to ſacrifices under the law, accompliſhed it's figurative types, and

and founded his church. Different computations may be made of these weeks; but reckon how we will, they must necessarily terminate with JESUS CHRIST. For GOD hath removed every difficulty which could possibly arise, by a decision which admits of no reply. A manifest event places us above the reach of all the evasive cavils of infidelity. The total destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jews, which so closely followed the death of JESUS CHRIST, and that righteousness and remission of sins declared to all people in his name, must constrain the most obdurate to acknowledge in his person the accomplishment of the prophecy.

While the second temple was building, the old men, who had seen the first, burst into tears, on comparing the meanness of this latter edifice with the magnificence of the former. The prophet Haggai, enlightened with a divine ray, is transported into future times; and endeavours to console them. He publishes the future glory of this second temple, and declares, *that it shall far exceed that of the first*; and the reason which he gives for this assurance is, *that*

that the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and ſhall appear in this new temple; that *peace ſhall be eſtabliſhed there*; that *the whole world in agitation* ſhall bear teſtimony to the coming of it's Redeemer; and that there is but a little while to come, to hold them in expectation of the event.

Malachi alſo beheld the glory of the ſecond temple, and the Meſſiah who ſhould honour it with his preſence: *Behold! a meſſenger is ſent to prepare the way before him.* But he who declares it is a meſſenger of an order entirely new; a meſſenger who is the LORD, who enters into the temple, as into the place of his ordinary reſidence; an envoy, *whom all the people deſire and delight in*, who comes to perfect a new alliance, and who, for that reaſon, is ſtiled, by way of eminence, *The Meſſenger of the Covenant: And ſuddenly*, ſays the prophet, *ſhall you ſee him come into* HIS *temple; even the* LORD *whom ye ſeek; even the Meſſenger of the Covenant in whom ye delight.* It is plain that the Meſſiah is ſignified by theſe two prophecies; He alone can *give peace to mankind*, by reconciling them to GOD: He alone

is

is *the desire of all nations*: He alone is that LORD who can have a temple [HIS *temple*]: and, lastly, He alone can, by his presence, communicate to the second temple, a glory which may surpass and efface that of the first. Now, but a few years after the death of JESUS CHRIST, who had so often appeared in the second temple, and who had there so frequently displayed the glory of his wisdom and power; this temple was entirely destroyed. It has, therefore, received the glory which was promised to it: the Messiah is come: and JESUS CHRIST is that Messiah; since in His name *peace* hath been announced, and *procured for mankind*; and *all nations* stirred up, and violently agitated, have felt the happy consequences of his coming.

If from hence we descend to that immense detail of prophecies which paint forth all the different characters of the Messiah, every circumstance of his life, and the whole series of his actions, can any one still hesitate to acknowledge that divine person in JESUS CHRIST?

Can

Can any one help ſeeing JESUS CHRIST in all theſe prophecies, which paint out the very name of the Meſſiah, his origin, the manner and the place of his nativity, his miniſtry, his works, and the miracles which accompany him, his humiliations, his paſſion, his death? — The conſequences and effects of his ſufferings, *viz.* the calling of the gentiles to the faith, and the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation? Let us ſtop here, and view the moſt important and expreſſive of thoſe prophecies, and we ſhall be forced to grant that the prophets, in drawing the portrait of the Meſſiah, have painted JESUS CHRIST with the greateſt exactneſs.

The ſufferings, and ſtate of abjectneſs, to which JESUS CHRIST reduced himſelf for our ſakes, and his unparalleled humiliations, became to the Jews a matter of reproach; and induced them to diſown him as the Meſſiah. But what ought particularly to have engaged them to receive him, and to conclude that he was the Meſſiah, is, that he united with thoſe all the other

other circumſtances which characterized that ſacred perſon.

The prophets, in deſcribing the magnificence and ſplendor of the Meſſiah, have not concealed the diſgraceful circumſtances of his character. They have ſeen him ſold *. They knew the number and the uſe of the *thirty pieces of ſilver with which he was bought* †. They have declared that *the ſhepherd ſhould be ſmitten, and the ſheep ſcattered* ‡, at the ſame time that they ſaw him *great and exalted* ||, they alſo ſaw him *diſgraced, deſpiſed, and lightly eſteemed amongſt men*; *the aſtoniſhment of the world*, as much by his meanneſs, as by his grandeur; *the leaſt amongſt men*; *a man of ſorrows*; *loaded with our iniquities*; *beneficent, yet neglected*; *diſfigured by his wounds, and thereby healing ours*; *burdened with ignominy, eſteemed rather as a worm than a man* §, *giving himſelf up to the ſmiter, and not hiding his face from thoſe who covered him with injuries, and ſpat upon him*; *treated as a cri-*

* Zech. xi. † Lam. iii. ‡ Zech. xiii.
|| Iſai. li. lii. § Ibid. l.

minal;

minal; *and led to puniſhment with the wicked*; *and delivering himſelf as a lamb*, peaceably, *to the ſlaughter*, *without having any one to make his defence**. They ſaw *a long poſterity ſpring from him*, *through his ſufferings* †. And the *converſion of the impious become the fruit and reward of his death*. David ſees *his hands and his feet pierced* ‡, *all his bones viſibly ſtaring through his ſkin*, by means of the weight of his body, being violently ſuſpended. He ſees *his garments divided* ||, *lots caſt for his robe*, *his mouth drenched with vinegar and gall*, *his enemies inſulting around him*, *and glutting their cruel rage in his blood*; *jeſting at his patience*, *and his confidence in* GOD. And, which clearly proves that all this is meant of the Meſſiah, he alſo, at the ſame time, like Iſaiah, ſees, as the reward of all his humiliations, *all the ends of the earth remember themſelves*, *and turn unto their* GOD; —that GOD who, for ſo many ages had been forgotten. He ſees *the poor come* firſt *to the table of the Meſſiah*, and, after them, the *rich and the powerful*, *to bleſs and adore him*; he, mean while,

* Dan. ix. † Iſai. liii. ‡ Pſal. xxii. || Pſal. lxviii.

pre-

preſiding in *the great* and numerous *church*, that is, in the congregation of converted nations; *and there declaring to his brethren the name of* GOD, and theſe everlaſting truths. No one can urge, that there is not in all theſe paſſages a direct reference to the Meſſiah; Him, of whom Iſaiah declares, that *He voluntarily bore all our iniquities*; *and ſuffers only becauſe he is willing ſo to do.* All we like ſheep had gone aſtray; and he is pierced *with afflictions for our miſdeeds: we have every one followed his own way, and the Lord hath ſmitten and bruiſed him for the expiation of our crimes*, and to procure peace for our ſouls. Can ſo illuſtrious a character as this agree with any other than the Meſſiah?

Thus have the Jews, by cauſing JESUS CHRIST to ſuffer and to die, given the finiſhing mark of the Meſſiah's character; and affixed the laſt ſeal to the accompliſhment of thoſe prophecies which reſpected him. Is it poſſible for us then to miſtake, or overlook JESUS CHRIST, when the Jews have thus, in every particular, treated him, as the Meſſiah was to be treated? How dear

and

and precious ought his ſufferings to be to us, ſince they are the price and ranſom of our ſouls; and ſince he only ſuffered, becauſe he was graciouſly inclined to charge himſelf with all that immenſe debt which we owed to the Divine Juſtice!

The knowledge of GOD diffuſed over the whole univerſe; the converſion of the gentiles; and the bleſſing on all nations, ſo long ago promiſed to the patriarch Abraham; are all pointed out by the prophets, as the certain evidence and fruit of the coming of the Meſſiah. They pronounce in the moſt ſplendid terms that benediction which ſhould be ſhed abroad upon the gentiles by his glorious advent: this *branch of Jeſſe* *, appears to Iſaiah *as an enſign ſet up by God, for the aſſembling of his people, and for the gentiles, to the end they may call upon it*; *and he ſhall waſh them*, ſays he, *with an holy ſprinkling* †. That which *was never told them ſhall they ſee*; *thoſe who have not ſearched, ſhall find him*; *and they who knew him not ſhall be called upon to contemplate his ex-*

* Iſai. xi. † Iſai. lii. liii lxv.

*cellencies. He is given for a witneſs to the people *, and for a leader, and a commander to the gentiles; and unto him ſhall the nations, from all parts, be aſſembled. He ſhall inſtruct the gentiles in righteouſneſs: He ſhall be their light: He ſhall open the eyes of the blind †, and bring the priſoners out of captivity. Under his glorious reign, the Aſſyrians, and the Ægyptians ‡, together with the Iſraelites, ſhall no longer be but as one and the ſame people of God: He ſhall become the author of ſalvation to all the ends of the earth. The nations which are beyond the ſea ‖, Africa, and Lybia, and the people of the Eaſt, and of iſlands the moſt remote, ſhall receive his meſſengers; he will ſet his ſign amongſt them; and they ſhall cauſe his glory to be known. Theſe nations ſhall come, and ſhall offer him their prayers, and his ſepulchre ſhall be glorious amongſt them §. The Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day **; and all idols ſhall be utterly aboliſhed. The heathen rage in vain ††, and kings and princes form uſeleſs conſpiracies againſt the Lord, and againſt his*

* Iſai. lv. † Ibid. xlii. ‡ Ibid. xix. xlix.
‖ Ibid. lxvi. § Ibid. xi. ** Ibid. ii.
†† Pſal. ii.

Anointed:

Anointed: For, *He that ſitteth in the height of heaven ſhall laugh them to ſcorn, and ſhall hold their inconſiderate projects in deriſion.* He eſtabliſhes the kingdom of his CHRIST in oppoſition to them all; nay, eſtabliſhes it even upon their own ruin: *Kings come to adore him* *; *and, as a mark of their homage, offer him preſents* †, *and keep a reſpectful ſilence before him.*

§. VIII. We need only conſider what has happened ſince the coming of JESUS CHRIST, to know whether he be the Meſſiah, whom it was foretold ſhould be the light and ſalvation of the nations. Now, how can we here exclude that flood of light which ſhines ſo glorioufly on all ſides? There is no need of reaſoning upon the matter. We have only to open our eyes, and conſider the change which has happened in the world. JESUS CHRIST commands his apoſtles to carry the goſpel through the whole earth: They ſeparate; all the powers of this world unite to oppoſe this growing Religion. Some write,

JESUS CHRIST proved to be the Meſſiah from a review of what has happened ſince his coming.

* Pſal. lxxii. † Iſa. lv.

others condemn, others deſtroy. And yet, in ſpite of all theſe obſtacles, JESUS CHRIST overthrows the Jewiſh worſhip in Jeruſalem, the centre of the nation; and out of it's votaries conſtitutes his firſt church; together with the worſhip of idols in Rome, which was the centre of idolatry. All this he performed by the ſole power of that word which had foretold theſe events. A ſecret virtue iſſues from the croſs; all idols are put away, and fall to the ground, though ſupported by the whole power of man. They are not the wiſe, or the noble, or the mighty, whom GOD Almighty employs to bring about ſo grand and marvellous an event. The work of GOD, begun in the humiliations of JESUS CHRIST, is conſummated in thoſe of his diſciples. GOD choſe that which was moſt vile and fooliſh according to the world's eſtimation, to confound the wiſe; and that which is weak and contemptible in appearance, to overturn the ſtrength and the powers of the age. Twelve men, of no reputation in the world's eſteem, prevail againſt kings and nations, aboliſh every idol, and ſubdue all that human greatneſs which intereſted itſelf in their defence.

The

The Roman power, which, till that time, nothing had been able to reſiſt, yields without ſuffering violence or compulſion. Chriſtians, without ſtirring up inſurrections, or giving any diſturbance, and, indeed, merely by undergoing all kinds of inhuman treatment, — are ſeen to change the face of the world, and to extend their doctrines over the whole univerſe. Nations the moſt bigotted to idolatry renounce it, and confine their adoration to the one true GOD. The Romans themſelves, the Greeks, people of every region and country, unite in multitudes to acknowledge the vanity of their idols. Nay, even of thoſe vagabond nations who wandered up and down without having any fixed place of reſidence, there were many, who, through the power of the name of JESUS CHRIST, were led to embrace the worſhip of the true GOD. The uſurper is driven from all parts; and the *ſtrong man armed*, after having triumphed over him, loads himſelf with all the ſpoils of his victory, and conſecrates them to the one true GOD. The facility with which ſo great a change was brought about,

is an evident miracle. But the greateſt of all miracles, is, that together with the faith, myſteries the moſt ſublime, virtues the moſt eminent, and exerciſes the moſt toilſome, every-where diſplayed themſelves.

What an aſtoniſhing change appears through the whole world! The veil is withdrawn; the darkneſs is diſperſed: Henceforward mankind learn how much they have been debaſed, and how low they have fallen by proſtituting themſelves to unworthy objects! They diſcern the dignity of their nature; and are convinced that they were formed for ſomething more excellent, and which alone is able to fill the vaſt extent of their ſouls. It is not the learned only who aſſert and maintain theſe great truths: The ſimple and the ignorant of ſo many different nations, equally believe them, and with equal effect contribute to publiſh them by their lives and conduct.

To ſuffer every thing for the truth's ſake, becomes an ordinary exerciſe amongſt them. They ruſh even to tortures, with a greater degree of ardour than others follow after pleaſures.

pleaſures. *Sicut apes ad alvearia*, ſays Julian, *ſic illi ad martyria*; "as bees haſten to their hives, ſo do they to martyrdom;" and by their contempt of the life preſent, eſtabliſh the immortality of the ſoul, and the certainty of a future ſtate in a more ſubſtantial manner than all the philoſophers were able to do, by the force of their reaſonings, and arguments.

What can be more divine, what more marvellous!—Men who, before, were given up to the controul of every paſſion, to every irregular appetite of fleſh and ſenſe;—ſeparate themſelves with the moſt lively ſatisfaction from all thoſe objects, in the purſuit of which their hearts had formerly countenanced and ſupported them with ſo much ardour. Deprive themſelves with joy of the moſt neceſſary ſupplies of life; and find more true delight in the tears and auſterities of penitence, than they had felt in all the vain pleaſures of the world! Men plunged into every vice, ſuddenly become chaſte, virtuous, ſober, and temperate: The world, all at once inflamed with the pureſt and moſt ardent charity, furniſhes every where the moſt

amazing examples of holineſs. The great renounce their honours, the opulent their riches, for the ſake of CHRIST. Hearts formerly ſwayed by the moſt untractable pride, who knew not what it was to ſuffer affronts, or to pardon injuries, become in an inſtant ſo mild, and ſo patient, that the moſt galling, moſt atrocious, and moſt ignominious treatment, appears not in the leaſt grievous or painful for them to bear; they find their glory and happineſs to conſiſt in them. Humility, whoſe very name till then was utterly unknown, preſents to the world a moſt enchanting ſcene: it's diſciples, lowly even to the deſpiſing themſelves, ſeek no other glory than that of him who is inviſible; place all their greatneſs in abaſing themſelves before their brethren, as well from the heart as by their actions. It is to them an honour to give place to others. What peace, what bliſsful harmony reigns amongſt the members of this new ſociety, which charity founded, and which love upholds! in which men forget their own only to adminiſter to the intereſt and advantage of others.

All

All of them are ſeen, eventhoſe men, ſo barbarous and brutal, who had before breathed forth nothing but murther and bloodſhedding, whom no law, no policy, could civilize or reclaim : — Theſe are ſeen, with one heart and mind, to glow with the moſt ardent charity, not only for the brethren, but even for their enemies and torturers; deſpoiling themſelves of every thing, to alleviate their wants, and diſpoſed to ſacrifice their lives, if the good of any ſoul could furniſh them with the leaſt occaſion ſo to do. Thus the earth transformed into a new world, preſents on all ſides a multitude of perſons of every ſex and quality, who, having arrived at the moſt uniform detachment from earthly conſiderations, no longer regard themſelves in any other light than as ſtrangers here below, who, wearied and ſatiated with all the things of time, and even with life itſelf, ſigh no longer for any but heavenly objects; haſtening in their wiſhes towards a death which is irkſome to frail nature, but which their faith, and the view of that felicity of which it cannot fail to pro-

procure them the poſſeſſion, render ſweet and amiable.

Had not Rouſſeau reaſon for ſaying, in one of his works, "*What argument can be "ſo effectually employed againſt the unbe-"liever, as the life of the true Chriſtian! "Would he but give it his conſideration, he "muſt unavoidably cry out, No! man, mere "man, cannot do this of himſelf; ſomething "more than human governs here.*" Yes, certainly; thoſe precious fruits, thoſe wonderful effects which the Chriſtian Religion hath produced in the world, are more than human; are ſupernatural. The philoſophers were able to perſuade but very few of their diſciples to follow their doctrines; But, JESUS CHRIST, even after his death, and while no longer viſible upon earth, perſuades whole nations to embrace his goſpel. *Muſt not ſomething more than human govern here?* The doctrine of JESUS CHRIST which attacks and oppoſes every irregular paſſion, extends itſelf every-where, amidſt the ſevereſt croſſes and encounters which are raiſed againſt it on all ſides. He eſtabliſhes his church, he founds it in martyrdom and

and ſufferings, and continues it in this violent and dangerous ſituation for the ſpace of three hundred years, without the enjoyment of a moment's repoſe. *Is man this of himſelf?* At length JESUS CHRIST, after having convinced mankind, by ſo long an experience, that he needed no human aid, no earthly power, for the eſtabliſhment of his church; calls into it kings and emperors, and appoints them the protectors of Chriſtianity; they come in from all parts of the world; and whatſoever the prophets had declared concerning the future glory of the church, becomes literally accompliſhed in the face of the whole world.

From whence comes this power, which could effect ſuch a wonderful change? The Meſſiah is come: JESUS CHRIST is that Meſſiah! Thus is the myſtery revealed: the promiſe which was made to bleſs all nations through him, and to give them to him for an inheritance, is now made good: he draws all mankind to him by means of his death, as he had foretold. The Holy Spirit, which ſo long ago was promiſed, is *poured out upon all fleſh*, through the

the efficacy of his ſacrifice. *I will pour out my Spirit upon all fleſh,* Joel ii. 28. The new covenant of which the Meſſiah was ordained the mediator, is ſealed with the blood of JESUS CHRIST, and by a natural conſequence of this covenant, GOD engraves his law no longer upon ſtone, as formerly, but writes and imprints in the ground of the heart. He takes away the ſtony heart, to ſubſtitute a fleſhly one in it's ſtead* : nations become his people, and he becomes their GOD. All from the leaſt to the greateſt acknowledge the LORD ; their iniquities are waſhed away in the blood of the Mediator of the new covenant, and righteouſneſs is eſtabliſhed upon the earth.

Application to the Jews : and conſideration of what Rouſſeau urges for them.

§ IX. It is not poſſible then to controvert the Meſſiah's coming, or that JESUS CHRIST united every character of that divine perſon in himſelf. Let the blind Jew, therefore, open his eyes at length, to that light which beams on every ſide for his intelligence and conviction. His former manner of worſhip, it's ſacrifices and ceremonies are all ſuperſeded, and rendered ineffectual without reſource, in order to ſubſtitute a worſhip which is

* Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26.

is more pure, and a sacrifice more worthy the Deity, according to the prophet's prediction; *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept any offering at your hands For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great amongst the heathen; because I am the great King; and my name shall be revered amongst all people.* Malachi. i. 10, 11, 14. For the offering of this new sacrifice and oblation, GOD hath chosen *priests and levites from amongst the people*, (Isai. lxvi.) as he foretold. The perpetual and unalterable succession of the high-priests of the Jewish law, is extinct with the temple; and GOD, to point out in a more striking manner, that it was irretrievable, caused the distinction of tribes and families, so carefully preserved till that period, to be entirely lost and forgotten; a fact in which the Jews themselves agree: The Almighty hath thereby signified that the new priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, was confirmed in JESUS CHRIST and his ministers, and that there was no more

more occaſion for Aaron and Levi. That confuſion which has happened in their families and tribes, clearly ſhows that the Meſſiah is come; ſince, being ordained to ſpring from the family of David, and from the tribe of Judah, it would be impoſſible at this day, to make out this deſcent by authentic vouchers.

What ſolid reply could the Jews urge, againſt proofs ſo convincing? Their own books furniſh us with thoſe proofs; and they cannot therefore be ſuſpected. But obſerve what Rouſſeau objects againſt us in favour of that people. "Do you know many Chriſtians, ſays he, * who have taken the pains "to examine carefully into what the Jews "have alledged againſt them? If there are a "few who know ſomething of it, it is "from what they have met with in the "writings of Chriſtians: a very pretty "manner, truly, of inſtructing themſelves "in the arguments of their opponents! "But what is to be done? Should any one "dare to publiſh amongſt us ſuch books "as openly eſpouſe the cauſe of Judaiſm, "we

* Vol. iii. p. 165, & ſeq.

" we ſhould puniſh the author, the editor " and the bookſeller. This policy is very " commodious, and very ſure to keep us " always in the right: we can refute at " pleaſure thoſe who are afraid to reply." Is it neceſſary then for every Chriſtian to know what the Jews can alledge againſt our religion? Is it not ſufficient for us to have a general knowledge of the fundamental arguments in proof of the divinity of the Chriſtian Religion, without perplexing ourſelves, with what it's adverſaries may inceſſantly be throwing out againſt it? We ſhould never make an end, if, previous to the embracing religion, it were neceſſary, or expected from us, to clear away every difficulty which human reaſon could lay in it's way. It would every day be neceſſary to drop the belief of what had been adopted the day preceding, in order to begin a freſh examination of ſuch new objections as might be propoſed. Do we act thus in the caſe of the arts, the ſciences, and every avocation of life: has a man, in whoſe mind the truth of any of theſe is once well eſtabliſhed, the leaſt occaſion to attend the examination and ſolution of every difficulty, before

fore he can purſue and fix himſelf in it? The Chriſtian Religion has at all times had men, who have carefully examined all that the moſt ſpecious Judaiſm could alledge, and have anſwered it with all that fortitude which the goodneſs of their cauſe gave them. The modern Jews can repeat nothing, which their fathers have not many times urged over and over, and which hath not conſtantly been defeated and overthrown by the learned apologies and excellent treatiſes of our writers. They have never complained that their objections were diſregarded; and if they had done ſo, they would only have raiſed contempt, or not been believed. Their books, whatever Rouſſeau may ſay, have always been ſufficiently common; where may we not meet with the writings of their rabbis and doctors? For more than three hundred years they ſaid, and did, and wrote whatever they pleaſed againſt the Chriſtian Religion: they ſtirred up the whole world againſt the diſciples of JESUS CHRIST; and ſuffered them to enjoy no peace in any city where they were found. They armed the Roman people and the emperors againſt this riſing church: they animated

mated the Pagans againſt it, and joined with them to perſecute and deſtroy it; if poſſible it has had no enemies more furious, more formidable, or more invidious: yet it triumphed over them, as well as over all others. This was not done by force or violence, ſeeing it was at that time without reputation or ſupport, and on every ſide expoſed to a multitude of malicious opponents. It was by the power of it's arguments therefore, and the ſtrength of the Moſt High, that it overcame the Jews, in like manner as it overcame it's other adverſaries *.

Have we then any need ſtill to take the trouble of examining carefully what Judaiſm may have alledged againſt our faith? Will not the Pagans have an equal right to demand a like diſcuſſion of whatever they have urged againſt the Chriſtian Religion? And what Religion, how well founded ſoever, can be eſtabliſhed amongſt men, if every ſucceeding generation muſt recur to an examination of all the objections which may have been made to it at different times, and

* See Limborch's conference with Orobio the Jew.

which have all been ſo often confuted and deſtroyed.

It is true, at the preſent period, in which the Chriſtian Religion is become victorious and predominant, it does not ſuffer, and with reaſon, that *ſuch books ſhould be publiſhed* in the very heart of it's territories, as *might openly eſpouſe the cauſe of Judaiſm*. Kings and princes having embraced it, and become it's protectors, have certainly a right to *puniſh the authors, editors, and venders* of ſuch productions. In a well governed ſtate, ſhould any one be ſuffered with impunity to attack it's laws, and the fundamental conſtitutions of ſociety, by publiſhing ſeditious works?—Now, civil ſociety being united with the Chriſtian ſociety, it is infringing the one to make any attack upon the other; and the authority of the former ought to be exerted in ſupport and vindication of the rights and privileges of the latter.

Rouſſeau may tell us, if he pleaſes, that *this policy is very convenient, and very ſure to make us always in the right*; and that *we can refute at pleaſure thoſe who dare not argue*

argue in reply. It is the policy which reaſon and natural juſtice dictate. What would become of ſociety, if every infidel, and impious perſon, muſt be allowed to ſow their errors abroad, and publicly and boldly vent their blaſphemies? What horrible confuſion in States and Religion would be the conſequence of ſuch a liberty? This policy, it is certain, may be abuſed. The Pagans formerly did abuſe it, when they would have condemned the Chriſtian Religion to ſilence; for truth alone hath a right to prevail over this policy; nor can any one have a right to impoſe ſilence on aught but error, which may juſtly be holden in the chains of ſervitude. Now every proof which we have hitherto produced has demonſtrated that the Chriſtian Religion is the only true Religion; and conſequently the ſecular power, which is connected with it, is well authorized to repreſs every diſturber or blaſphemer of that Religion. Unbelieving Jews cannot lawfully complain of this treatment. Let them only conſider how, according to Moſes's law, thoſe who ſhould dare to oppoſe their Religion, were formerly treated: was it allowed amongſt them to give a free courſe to ſuch

books as openly combatted Judaiſm? The divinity of their Religion being ſo ſolidly eſtabliſhed, it would have been offering the moſt atrocious indignity to the GOD whom they adored, to conceive that there was any need previouſly to the embracing the worſhip he had preſcribed, to examine carefully every thing that the Pagans could alledge againſt Judaiſm.

" Thoſe amongſt us, proceeds Rouſſeau, " who have an opportunity to converſe with " the Jews, have but little advantage. Theſe " unhappy people know they lie at our " mercy. The tyranny which we exerciſe " over them renders them juſtly timid and " reſerved; they know how far cruelty and " injuſtice are compatible with Chriſtian " Charity: what therefore can they venture " to ſay to us, without running the riſque of " incurring the charge of blaſphemy? Ava- " rice inſpires us with zeal; and they are " too rich not to be ever in the wrong. The " moſt ſenſible and learned among them, " are the moſt circumſpect and reſerved. " We make a convert, perhaps, of ſome " wretched hireling, to calumniate his ſect;

" or

" or ſet a parcel of pitiful brokers diſputing,
" who give up the point merely to gratify
" us ; but while we triumph over the ig-
" norance or meanneſs of ſuch paltry oppo-
" nents, the learned amongſt them ſmile in
" contemptuous ſilence at our folly. But,
" do you think, that in places where they
" might write and ſpeak ſecurely, we
" ſhould have ſo much the advantage of
" them ?" What a ſtring of frivolous and unjuſt declamations is this ! Rouſſeau well knows their inſufficiency of thoſe reaſons which the Jews may alledge ; and in order to ſupply their deficiency, and more effectually to impoſe them upon us, he pretends that *theſe unhappy people lie at our mercy, and that the tyranny we exerciſe over them, renders them timid, and prevents their uſing proper means for their defence.* But who exerciſed tyranny for more than three hundred years together ? Were not the Chriſtians in all that time *at the mercy of the Jews ?*

When the Jews, uniting with the Pagans, perſecuted the Chriſtians in the moſt rigorous manner, had they not then all neceſſary time and opportunity to defend themſelves,

ſelves, and to produce all the reaſons they could poſſibly urge againſt this growing Religion? The Pagans too,—who gave them up, in order to become it's followers, in ſpite of every effort of the baffled Jews, to divert and attach them to their party, — do not *they* ſhew us how little regard we ought to pay to all their reaſons, by that contempt which themſelves have expreſſed for them? more ſincere and honeſt than the Jews, they clearly diſcerned in their books, what their amazing perverſeneſs hindered them from acknowledging. As for the reſt, whatever may be the ſtate of the Jews amongſt us, this ſtate, very far from raiſing the leaſt prepoſſeſſion againſt the Chriſtian Religion, turns out, on the contrary, to be an evidence in it's favour: becauſe, as we ſhall preſently ſhew, it was foretold that the Jews ſhould fall into this ſervile ſtate of ſubjection, in puniſhment of the crime which they committed againſt the Meſſiah.

But, can any one excuſe the atrocious indignity which Rouſſeau offers the Chriſtian Religion? "*The Jews*, he tells us, *know how far cruelty and injuſtice are compatible with*

" *with Chriſtian Charity.*" Does this unchriſtian writer know the characters of Chriſtian Charity? or will he ſhew us, that it ever countenanced cruelty and injuſtice? In every particular it preſcribes nothing but love and tenderneſs towards our brethren; and reſtrains every the leaſt emotion of hatred or revenge, even to it's enemies. Chriſtian Charity is gentle, mild, and patient; ſeeketh not her own intereſt; is not puffed up, nor moroſe; rejoiceth not in iniquity; harbours no evil deſign; beareth all things; endureth all things; the misfortunes of it's brethren pierce it with the moſt lively ſorrow. Such are it's characters; and all thoſe whoſe actions are not regulated by theſe principles, are uninfluenced by Chriſtian Charity. Are ſuch then cruel, or unjuſt? It is becauſe they have left this fair conductor: luſt and the paſſions are the rule of their deſires, and inſtigate their conduct. Let but Chriſtian Charity take poſſeſſion of their hearts, and injuſtice and cruelty will preſently be baniſhed from them. But ſuch is Rouſſeau's diſingenuity, ever to place to the account of the Chriſtian Religion, thoſe impieties and diſorders which men only com-

mit becauſe they have deviated from it's ſacred dictates.

" *Avarice*, continues he, *inſpires us with* " *zeal*; *and the Jews are too rich not to be* " *ever in the wrong*." If they are very rich, it follows, that *we exerciſe no tyranny over them* with reſpect to their worldly concerns: and they can neither *complain of lying at our mercy*, nor accuſe us of *injuſtice* towards them: any one who knows ever ſo little of the character of the Jews, may better judge than Rouſſeau, whether it be they or the Chriſtians, who are guilty of injuſtice. They are rich;—it is true: but by how many unjuſt and illicit methods do they become ſo? They glory in deceiving Chriſtians, and in practiſing every kind of fraud in their dealings with them.

" *We make a convert, perhaps*, adds Rouſſeau, " *of ſome wretched hireling, to calumniate his* " *ſect*; *or ſet a parcel of pitiful brokers diſ-* " *puting, who give up the point merely to* " *gratify us*; *but while we triumph over the* " *ignorance or meanneſs of theſe deſpicable* " *opponents, the learned among them ſmile in* " *contemptuous*

" *contemptuous ſilence at our folly: but, do*
" *you believe, that in places where they might*
" *write and ſpeak ſecurely, we ſhould have ſo*
" *much the advantage of them?* " What! were Paul, and the other apoſtles, the diſciples of JESUS CHRIST, and the believers of the church at Jeruſalem, *miſerable wretches, hired to calumniate their ſect?* —Were they *a parcel of vile brokers, who gave up the point, merely to gratify us?* Were theſe men, who were ſo diſintereſted, who ſacrificed all to bear teſtimony to the truth of the goſpel, and who did not even yield to the moſt excruciating torments; were they ignorant or daſtardly? They, whoſe light hath ſhone throughout the world, and diſpelled the gloom, which wholly overſpread it; whoſe power triumphed over whatever is moſt dreadful and formidable in the univerſe. Were they ignorant or daſtardly? With ſuch nothing could ſuit better than to live in peace, and be ſheltered in ſecurity: but nothing was ever more free and voluntary than the ſufferings of theſe men. And what did they gain by them in this life?—It neceſſarily follows therefore, that they were fully perſuaded of the certainty of thoſe truths which

which they avowed, ſince they delivered themſelves with joy to ſo many evils, trials, and contradictions, in confirmation of it.

If at this day fear or intereſt can induce ſome pitiful brokers among the Jews to ſpeak in favour of the Chriſtian Religion; ſuch teſtimonies are unworthy of it; and it diſavows them. Thoſe who ſhould be mean enough to ſuggeſt, to buy, or to conſtrain ſuch *evidence*, muſt be actuated by quite another ſpirit than that of the Chriſtian Religion, which requires no ſuch aſſiſtance to extend or ſupport it. Yet, for once, in order that we may form a right judgment of their Religion, let us trace out what it's true ſpirit is, and not ſtop at the mere conduct of thoſe who may deſpiſe or deviate from it's precepts.

Of modern Judaiſm.

§. X. "*The Jewiſh doctors, the learned* "*amongſt them*, Rouſſeau tells us, *ſmile in* "*contemptuous ſilence at our folly.*" But what have they to ſay? and what can they object to us, which will not demonſtrate the profoundneſs of their ignorance?—Let but any one follow them, theſe learned Jews, through

through every period of time, and he will perceive nothing but malice, obſtinate incredulity, implacable rage againſt JESUS CHRIST and his diſciples, atrocious calumnies, frivolous evaſions, and ſubtle ſubterfuges, throughout the whole of their conduct.

The grand reaſon which they urge for having rejected JESUS CHRIST is *that* only one found in all their writings, in the *Talmud*, and in the works of their rabbies, namely, that JESUS CHRIST ſubdued no nations by force of arms; He fell, ſay they; He yielded, and was killed; He hath not vanquiſhed the heathens by his power; He hath not ſubdued them to us; He hath not enriched us with their ſpoils. Theſe blind people flattered themſelves, that the Meſſiah would deliver them from their ſervitude under foreign princes; that He would have given them the empire of the whole world; that He would have made his appearance, with all the ſplendid magnificence of a mighty conqueror; would have reduced all nations to their dominion by the terror of his arms, and made them tributaries

ries to the Jews. Fallen under the government of the Romans, and attentive only to ideas of pride and independence; they could not endure their ſituation, but with the moſt galling impatience. The more they felt themſelves preſſed with the yoke which the Gentiles impoſed, the greater hatred and jealouſy did they conceive againſt them. Hence ſprung their averſion to a Meſſiah, who was not a warrior; or formidable to thoſe powers, who held them in captivity. Thus, forgetting the many prophecies, which expreſsly ſignified his humiliations, they attended to none but ſuch as ſpoke of triumphs, though very different ones from thoſe they deſired. Theſe ignorant people rejected JESUS CHRIST, becauſe they beheld in him nothing but *ſolid greatneſs*, deſtitute of all thoſe external trappings which ſtrike the ſenſes; and found that he rather came to condemn, than crown their blind ambition: fooliſh and unwiſe! who ſaw not that their greateſt and moſt inveterate enemies were not men, but the vices and irregularities ſpringing from their corrupt inclinations!

What

What advantage could that Meſſiah have procured to us, whom the Jews figured out and expected? Whatever he might have offered us, could have been only adapted to ſooth our pride and vanity. He could not have known our true miſery: He could only have enflamed our paſſions; given them a ſanction; and miniſtered to, inſtead of reclaiming them. Very far from bettering our condition, he would but have rendered our diſorders more deplorably dangerous: and, ignorant of that real excellence of man's nature, which is able to render him happy, would have ſubſtituted terreſtrial and tranſient enjoyments, which we ought to deſpiſe; in the place of thoſe ſubſtantial and durable bleſſings, which alone we ought to deſire.

It would not only be particularly neceſſary for us, in this caſe, to *reject* ſuch a Meſſiah, but we ought to fly him as a ſeducer, who would deſtroy us by flattering our frailties: far from placing any confidence in him, we ſhould deteſt him, as being leagued with the enemy of our ſalvation.

§. XI.

A suffering Messiah necessary and proper for man.

§. XI. Let a man be never so weak a believer, he will easily be induced to grant that JESUS CHRIST the true Messiah is come, in the manner, and under those circumstances, wherein we might reasonably expect him.

Man having become culpable, and a traitor to his LORD, the divine justice required a reparation proportioned to the enormity of the offence: no created being, how excellent soever, could worthily repair that injury which sin had committed against the Deity. JESUS CHRIST comes into the world to reconcile it with GOD: He charges himself with our debt, and offers freely to satisfy it for us. How could he, after this engagement, be exempted from suffering and humiliation?

Man, having erred from the path of duty, no longer knew wherein his true happiness consisted: He had accustomed himself to seek it in the deceitful things of the present life. JESUS CHRIST, desirous to undeceive him, and to reclaim him from his error, teaches him to contemn the enjoyments of this

this lower world, and, detaching his heart from them, to elevate it to thoſe everlaſting enjoyments, which alone were worthy to engage his love, and alone capable of ſatisfying the vaſt extent of his deſires. It became neceſſary, therefore, in order to undeceive and inſtruct us effectually, that the GOD-MAN ſhould himſelf begin the taſk, by ſtripping and diveſting himſelf of all that which man, with ſo much ardor, purſued. Man, otherwiſe, would have regarded the precepts of his SAVIOUR in no other light than as the vain ſpeculations of a philoſopher; ſpeculations which his own actions contradicted, and which it was impoſſible to reduce to practice.

The greateſt evil which befel man after he became a ſinner, was, that he feared nothing ſo much as ſuffering and abaſement; though nothing was more neceſſary and uſeful for him. It was impoſſible, while poſſeſſed with this fear and horror, to apply his mind to the chief good, and follow it with aſſiduity and conſtancy. The evils and afflictions of life would quickly have diverted his mind from that great object. The Eternal

nal Wiſdom, therefore, cloathed with our human nature, proceeds to ſhew him, by the whole of His conduct, how highly he ought to eſteem ſuffering and mortification, ſince He himſelf made all his delight and glory to conſiſt in them: He convinces him how little reaſon he has to fear them, ſince the man with whom He is united, can triumph ſo gloriouſly over them. By leſſons invigorating and pathetic like theſe, did JESUS CHRIST ſpeak to men far more effectually than by all imaginable arguments whatſoever.

Again, man was no longer ſuſceptible of proper feelings; he had obſcured all his reaſoning faculties, and given full range intirely to the ſenſes: he had even carried his folly ſo far as to ſerve and worſhip the vileſt created beings. To reaſon with a malady of this ſort, which the violence of his paſſions made more grievous, would only have been to irritate him, and render his evil irremediable. Accordingly, what have the philoſophers gained with all their pompous diſcourſes and ſubtle reaſonings? Have they overturned one of thoſe altars whereon ſo many

many monſtrous Deities were worſhiped? Where are theſe ſages? What have they effected? JESUS CHRIST, deſirous to heal and reſtore fallen man, takes another method to attain his purpoſe. He completely confounds human reaſon by the myſtery of his croſs; and thus applies the remedy to the ſource of the evil. Idolatry derived it's original from that profound attachment we have to ourſelves. This it was which induced men to invent gods like themſelves; Deities ſubject to like vices and paſſions with them. Under the denomination of theſe pretended Deities, men really worſhiped their irregular appetites, crimes, and diſorders. JESUS CHRIST, to convert them from their errors, imprints upon their hearts the love of the croſs, inſtead of the love of pleaſure; He teaches them, by the example of his ſufferings and poverty, to renounce and ſacrifice all things: by this means the idols which had been outwardly worſhiped, were quickly overthrown and deſtroyed, becauſe thoſe qualities which they externally adored, no longer ſubſiſted; and man, far from framing a Deity like himſelf,

thenceforth inceſſantly laboured to become like the true GOD.

Could a remedy be imagined more effectual to remove the evils under which man ſuffered, or more worthy the divine goodneſs and wiſdom? What depth in that myſtery of GOD made man, and become humble even to the death of the croſs, for the ſalvation of mankind! The wiſdom of it is ſo ſublime, that, to our falſe underſtanding, which cannot attain unto it, it appeared even as folly: man willingly acknowledged as Deities, Beings who were but men, and men as ſinful as himſelf. To correct this error, and to accommodate himſelf to our weakneſs, a new object of adoration is preſented to man; a GOD, become man! but who hath loſt nothing of that which *He was*, by taking upon him what *we are*; who hath abaſed himſelf to our low condition, without ſelf-degradation, in order to elevate our ſouls to him. It is a worſhiper, equal in all reſpects, with him whom he adores, who comes to repair the defects in our worſhip; and uniting with his own, the adoration

tion of the members whom he incorporates under him their head, communicates to them that infinite reward of which He himſelf is the principle and ſource.

§. XII. But, though JESUS CHRIST came amongſt men in a ſtate of poverty and abaſement; though he appeared wholly deſtitute of every earthly accommodation; yet what real greatneſs doth he diſplay through the veil which conceals him! Let us follow him through every circumſtance of his life: We ſhall in all reſpects behold him acting like a GOD. The learned doctors aſſembled in the temple, behold with awe his infancy more wiſe and intelligent than all the ſagacity of ancient men. He opens his miſſion by a multitude of unheard-of miracles: He performs them magiſterially, and with authority. Their ſource is in himſelf: He performs them as a maſter, who only commands that nature which he formed: and as in the days of old He ſpake, and it was done; ſo He ſpeaks ſtill, and all is re-eſtabliſhed. His divine virtue is every-where diſplayed: to touch him, is to be cured: Though he be poor, He, on The divine character of JESUS CHRIST.

every occaſion, ſhows, even in that indigence, that he is the fountain of all riches, who diſpoſeth of them at his pleaſure; the Father, who nouriſheth all men, who multiplieth their beings, and giveth them increaſe. Devils cannot ſupport the ſplendor of his preſence; they acknowledge their Judge, and fly away terrified: all the elements of nature own him for their Author, and are obedient to his Word: the waves grow calm at his voice, and the waters become firm under his footſteps.

The knowledge of Futurity preſents nothing to His view, which can affect, or trouble, or ſurprize him. He ſpeaks of it as of the preſent moment: He ſhews that this knowledge is plain and natural to him, and that he deriveth it from it's proper ſource in himſelf: ſhews that all ages are ranged in due order before him, and that he diſpoſeth all their ſeveral events: He reads the very ground of the heart; and anticipates all it's thoughts and motions: He holds the human will in his hand, and turns it at his pleaſure; He makes himſelf followed and obeyed by whomſoever he pleaſes;

and

and ſhews that nothing could reſtrain him from bending and rendering docile the moſt obdurate and rebellious minds. What wiſdom directs his anſwers! His every reply confounds all the combined malice of his enemies, and leaves them nothing but ſhameful deſpair, at having nothing to urge in return.

What beauty! what ſublimity in his doctrine! Every precept is conſonant with the ſoundeſt reaſon, and every thing in it aſtoniſhes reaſon; every particular of it is admirably adapted to the miſery, the neceſſities, and the excellence of man's nature. They are not ſuch ſcattered and imperfect ſentences, as are elſewhere to be found; but all together they form a complete ſyſtem of the moſt perfect and the moſt exalted righteouſneſs. And yet, — He who utters all theſe wonderful things, is a man, unlettered, and unuſed to ſtudy, who, all on a ſudden, raiſed himſelf to a ſcience, above all that the greateſt philoſophers, and the wiſeſt men of all ages, had been able to diſcover, by their tedious watches and profound meditations. From whence then did he gain

that which no man was able to underſtan before him? What is yet more remarkable, He treats of the moſt important truths without pains or labour; propoſes them with a magiſterial authority, and expounds them with an enchanting ſimplicity. His doctrines are a thouſand times more ſublime than all that mankind could ever before invent: yet He has the ſecret art of placing them within the reach of the moſt ſimple and ignorant minds. Who could fail to admire the condeſcenſion wherewith he tempers and qualifies the depth of the greateſt myſteries? It is made milk to the feeble children, and bread to the ſtrong. Full of the ſecret things of GOD, he is no way aſtoniſhed at them like other mortals, to whom the Deity communicates himſelf; but he ſpeaks of them as of natural events, as one bred up in the knowledge of them: and He clearly demonſtrates to mankind that the very eſſence of truth dwells in him perſonally.

What ſanctity in his life! What a love for virtue! What contempt of worldly things! What indifference to the eſtimation

and

and praiſe of men! What zeal for that of the Supreme Being! What charity! What ardent deſire for the ſalvation of men! What unparalleled equanimity! Did there ever appear a man, ſo exempt from all the weakneſſes moſt inſeparable from humanity? One ſees not in his conduct any of thoſe unguarded intervals to which man is naturally liable. Sanctity ſhines throughout the whole of his conduct; and all his actions are the moſt faithful expreſſion of his doctrine and his precepts. Never man remonſtrated to others with ſo much gentleneſs and affability; and yet his beneficence is only recompenſed with continual perſecution. He inceſſantly does good to the ungrateful: His zeal and charity for them betray him to the crueleſt torments; yet he dies, without finding either gratitude in his beneficiaries, fidelity in his friends, or equity in his judges. And, in defiance of trials ſo terribly ſevere, always preſerves the ſame placability, conſtancy, and charity.

But here, Let even the inconſiſtent Rouſſeau be heard: "What ſweetneſs, ſays he, what "purity in his manners! What an affecting

" gracefulneſs in his delivery! What ſub-
" limity in his maxims! What profound
" wiſdom in his diſcourſes! How great the
" command over his paſſions! Where is the
" man, where is the philoſopher, who could
" ſo live, ſo ſuffer, and ſo die, without weak-
" neſs, and without oſtentation? — When
" Plato deſcribed his imaginary good man*
" loaded with all the ignominy of guilt, yet
" meriting the higheſt rewards of virtue,
" he deſcribes exactly the character of
" JESUS CHRIST: the reſemblance was ſo
" ſtriking that all the fathers perceived it,
" nor indeed was it poſſible to be overlook-
" ed †."

How noble then is this GOD-MAN even amidſt his abaſement and his humiliations! He ſuffers only becauſe he wills to ſuffer; He only falls into the hands of his enemies, becauſe the appointed hour is come: He ſhews them that they have no power over him, but what he voluntarily communicates to them: and he dies becauſe he hath determined to reſign up his ſoul for a time.

* De Rep. Dial. I. † Vol. iii. p. 179.

But

But, ſcarcely is he dead on the croſs, ere the impreſſions of his power and greatneſs are everywhere perceived: all nature, in agitation and diſorder owns her LORD! The ſun, who with-holds his ſhining, proclaims that it is in ſubjection to his decree, even after his death; the graves, which, yawning, eject their dead, acknowledge Him *who leadeth down to the gates of the grave, and bringeth back*; and declare, that He who but now was put to death, has not however loſt the power of reſuming that life which he had ſo freely reſigned: accordingly, He riſes again at the time prefixed; and thus everlaſtingly confounds the envy, the malice, and all the vain precautions of his enemies.

He appears to his diſciples who had abandoned him, and who were obſtinately bent to doubt his reſurrection: They ſee him; they converſe with him; they touch him; and are convinced. To confirm the belief of his reſurrection in their minds, He ſhews himſelf to them at different times, and in various circumſtances. His diſciples behold him ſeverally: they alſo ſee him when they

are

are all together: and at one time he appears to more than five hundred in a company. The apoſtle who hath related this fact, affirms, that the greateſt part of the ſpectators lived even in the time in which he wrote: He does not ſhew himſelf to the people, and to his enemies; becauſe thoſe unbelievers, who had contemned all thoſe inſtructions which he would fain have inculcated upon them, were become wholly unworthy of this new act of beneficence; and becauſe that faith which was ordained to impart ſo great rewards, ought alſo to receive ſomething in acknowledgment from man *. Raiſed from the dead, He gives his apoſtles and diſciples all the time they could deſire for conſidering him fully: and after having reſided intimately amongſt them, in the manner moſt ſuited to their wiſhes, ſo as that they could no longer entertain the leaſt doubt of what they beheld, reſpecting him, he commands them to bear throughout the whole word the teſtimony of all that they ſaw and heard, and felt. And, to the end that no

* See Biſhop Sherlock's Trial of the witneſſes; and Ditton on the Reſurrection.

ſuſpicion

ſuſpicion might poſſibly remain concerning their perfect faith and full perſuaſion, he lays them under an obligation to ſeal their teſtimony with their own blood. By this means their preaching becomes immoveably confirmed: it's foundation is an abſolute fact, unanimouſly atteſted by thoſe who themſelves ſaw it, and whoſe ſincerity is juſtified by the ſtrongeſt trial which can be conceived; — a ſubmiſſion to tortures, and even death itſelf.

Now, is it not more noble and glorious on the part of JESUS CHRIST, to have triumphed over death, by riſing again from the grave, than it would have been to have avoided the ſtroke for the preſervation of his life? Fully able as he was to aſcend, vigorous and immortal, from the tomb, would it not have been a more eaſy matter for him to have come down from the croſs, when the Jews inſultingly defied him to do ſo? What hand more ſtrong than that of the Saviour, which overcame the world, unarmed with the ſword of violence; but after his death; after having been ignominiouſly nailed to

the

the croſs, and pierced with the ſpear? Where are the conquerors, who, after their death, have ſubdued the world by the ſingle virtue of their name? Is not the ſpiritual kingdom and dominion of JESUS CHRIST, thus founded in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and eſtabliſhed by a victory gained over the vices and paſſions of the human ſoul, more worthy of our homage and reverence, than any earthly and tranſient empire, which can only render it's poſſeſſors unhappy? How truly powerful muſt he be, who holds his kingdom over the hearts and affections of men; and acts upon them by his love and grace, in a more effectual manner than kings have ever done by means of the ſword, and the terror of their arms!

"It is ridiculous then, ſays Paſchal, to "be offended at the mean condition of "JESUS CHRIST; ſince this low ſtate "was of the ſame nature with that excel- "lence and magnificence which he came "to reveal: it would have been to no pur- "poſe for our Lord JESUS CHRIST to "have aſſumed grandeur, in his kingdom "of holineſs; and to have come in all the

"pomp

" pomp of majeſty: but how ſuitably does
" he diſplay himſelf to us, with ſplendor in
" his goſpel! With what great pomp, and
" prodigious magnificence, doth he appear
" to be inveſted, to the eyes of the heart;
" and to thoſe who can diſcern true wiſ-
" dom! What man ever poſſeſſed more
" glory than JESUS CHRIST? The whole
" people of the Jews foretels his coming:
" the Gentiles worſhip him after he is
" come: the two people, Gentile and Jew-
" iſh, regard him as their common center;
" yet what man ever leſs availed himſelf of
" ſo much glory!—Never man enjoyed ſo
" much applauſe; never man underwent a
" heavier load of ignominy. All this ſplen-
" dor ſerved only to render our tribute of
" grateful acknowledgment more indiſputa-
" bly due to that divine Benefactor, who
" received nothing of it for himſelf."

Let us then ſtretch forth our arms to our great Deliverer, who, having been promiſed for the ſpace of four thouſand years, is at length come to ſuffer, and to die for us, at the time, and in all the circumſtances, foretold concerning him.

§. XIII.

Jewish obstinacy proof of the truth of Christianity.

§. XIII. But observe the grand objection which Rousseau urges in favour of the Jews: "Among the doctors of the Sorbonne, says "he, it is as clear as day, that the predic- "tions concerning the Messiah, relate to "JESUS CHRIST. Among the Rabbis "at Amsterdam, it is just as evident that "they have no relation to him at all."

But, Who have the Jews been able to persuade of what appears so clear to them? JESUS CHRIST, on the contrary, hath persuaded many different people and nations of what the Jews refuse to acknowledge. But how blind is even Rousseau himself, to object that against the Christian Religion which forms one of the most conclusive arguments in its favour? For certainly, if the whole Jewish nation had perceived JESUS CHRIST in the prophecies descriptive of the Messiah, we ought not, for that reason, to have looked upon JESUS CHRIST as such; since the scriptures have throughout declared that the Jews would be infatuated with regard to the Messiah, and would reject him. *The stone which the builders refused is become the head*

head-stone in the corner *. *Their eyes are darkened that they cannot see* †. *In vain* doth God *stretch forth his hands all the day long, towards this incredulous people* ‡, in order to draw them to Him. *They hear indeed what he says to them, but they do not understand; they see what is held forth to them, but they do not comprehend it. Their heart is rendered insensible, their ears are heavy, their eyes are closed* ‖; *the Lord hideth his face from the house of Jacob: He will be to them for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel: a snare, and an occasion of falling, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They shall be hurt against this stone, they shall fall and be broken* §. *The Lord will cover the eyes of their chiefs, their prophets, and their rulers, and all the visions of the true prophets respecting this matter shall be as the words of a book which is sealed. For the Lord will do a marvellous work amongst the people, a wonderful work, which shall surprize all the world.* For behold, *the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,*

* Psal. cxvii. † Ib. lxviii. ‡ Isai. lxv.
‖ Ib. vi. § Ib. viii.

and

and the underſtanding of their prudent men ſhall be hid *. The manner, therefore, in which the Jews explain thoſe ſcriptures which reſpect the Meſſiah, ought not to perplex us. *They waited for light, but they are in obſcurity; they hoped for brightneſs, but they walk in darkneſs; they walk on groping, and ſtumble and hurt themſelves, even at noon-day* †. Thus their predicted blindneſs turns out as a further proof, in fact, of the Chriſtian Religion.

Proofs from the prophecies concerning the city and temple of Jeruſalem.

§. XIV. But what will the Jews anſwer to thoſe clear prophecies pronounced by JESUS CHRIST himſelf, againſt their city and temple? Theſe are all plain, preciſe, and what is more than all, they are accompliſhed. JESUS CHRIST, applying to himſelf the ancient prophecies which concerned the Meſſiah, foretels to the Jews the approaching deſtruction of the temple and the city of Jeruſalem, as the chaſtiſement of their ingratitude and refuſal to believe in him. Penetrated with grief at the obſtinacy of it's inhabitants, He weeps over the unhappy city, ſaying, *If thou hadſt known, at leaſt*

* Iſai. xxix. † Ib. lix.

in

in this late day which is allowed thee, the things which may procure thee peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes: For the time shall come, unhappy for thee, when thine enemies shall cast trenches about thee, and compass thee round, and close thee in on every side; and they shall lay thee even with the ground, and destroy thee, and thy children within thy walls, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time in which thy God visited thee *. JESUS CHRIST assures them, that *all the righteous blood, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, which they have shed upon the earth, shall fall upon the present generation.* And *that the houses of Jerusalem should soon be left desolate, because she had not heard him, when he would have gathered her children together* †. The disciples of JESUS, desiring him to observe the admirable grandeur and beauty of the architecture of the temple: *Jesus said unto them, See you not all these buildings? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be*

* Luke xix. 41, &c. † Mat. xxiii. 35, &c.

thrown down *. And in the concluſion of the prediction he declares to them, that *the preſent generation ſhould not paſs away till all thoſe things were fulfilled*; that *all thoſe events ſhall befal the race then exiſting* †. There need no more than to conſult hiſtory, in order to find the moſt faithful completion of theſe prophecies of JESUS CHRIST.

Let any one read Joſephus—by name and religion a Jew,—general of the Jewiſh forces at the beginning of the war, and made priſoner by the Roman army; who, with his own eyes, beheld all that he relates concerning the ſiege and deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Such an author cannot be ſuſpected of miſrepreſentation; and he hath every character requiſite to entitle him to full credit. Jeruſalem, according to the prediction of JESUS CHRIST, was to be entrenched, and ſhut up on every ſide. Joſephus tells us it was ſo; nay, that beſides the ordinary intrenchments, it was ſurrounded by an high wall, which cloſed it in on all quarters. JESUS CHRIST had foretold, that *the time approached where-*

* Mat. xxiv. 2. † Mark xiii.

in

in men ſhould ſay, Bleſſed are the barren, and the wombs which never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck *. And whatever Joſephus tells us of the horrors of that war, and of the dreadful famine which deſolated the city, and even compelled mothers to devour their infants, ſhews the perfect accompliſhment of this prophecy. JESUS CHRIST ſignified that the deſolation ſhould be ſo great, as that the like had never been known. And did any one ever before hear of ſo terrible a diſaſter? This people becomes diſtracted by a thouſand internal factions; every poſſible calamity falls upon and overwhelms it; plague, famine, carnage, and murders, are all confederate againſt it, in vengeance for the blood of the juſt which had there been ſhed. Though preſſed on every ſide, and reduced to the laſt extremity, while Titus is deſirous of nothing ſo much as to ſave them, and repeatedly offers them pardon; ſmitten with the moſt amazing infatuation, they reject all his propoſals, and (unparalleled fact!) Joſephus reckons up 1,100,000 men who periſhed in the ſiege.

* Luke xxiii. 29.

At length the city, being reduced to an heap of aſhes, is taken, and totally deſtroyed, as JESUS CHRIST had foretold. Titus was deſirous to preſerve the temple at all events, and accordingly he laid his whole army under the ſtricteſt injunctions not to touch it: But *heaven and earth ſhall paſs away rather than the word of* JESUS CHRIST *ſhall fail.* An inviſible hand incites a ſoldier, who caſts a lighted brand; the fire catches; Titus runs towards the temple, and gives orders for the ſpeedy extinction of the riſing flames: but all efforts are ineffectual; and that magnificent and beautiful ſtructure is in a moment reduced to aſhes. The finger of GOD is ſo viſible in this whole expedition againſt the Jews, that even *Titus*, who deſtroyed them, acknowledges that he did nothing but ſtretch out his hand on the behalf of a GOD irritated againſt them, and act as the miniſter of divine vengeance, which thus purſued this unfortunate people *. Thus completely was the decree pronounced by JESUS CHRIST executed againſt the Jews,

* See Joſeph. of the Jew. war, B. vi. ch. ix. §. 1. and Biſhop Newton's very excellent diſſertations on the prophecies.

who

who had contemned and forgotten him. *They ſhall raſe thy walls, and deſtroy thee, and thy children within thee, becauſe thou knewеſt not the time of thy God's viſitation.*

All theſe events happened at the preciſe time prefixed. The generation which lived in the time of JESUS CHRIST, ſaw all theſe calamities befal them. Adrian, at length, completed their extermination, cauſing 600,000 more of them to periſh. The wretched remains of this unfortunate people were driven from their native country with all the marks of divine vengeance. They were interdicted Judæa under the moſt rigorous penalties, and were carried away captive into all nations, as JESUS CHRIST had alſo foretold *. Can any one ſtill doubt whether JESUS CHRIST be the promiſed Meſſiah; or whether the Jews have not deſpiſed and diſregarded his viſitation Doth not ſuch a chaſtiſement (the prediction of it being ſo clear, ſo particular, ſo very circumſtantial, as that which JESUS CHRIST

* See Luke xxi. 24.

pronounced, declaring it at the ſame time to be the puniſhment of the Jews' incredulity with reſpect to Him) warrant to us the truth of that application which he made to his own perſon, of the prophecies which referred to the Meſſiah?

Proof from the attempt of Julian to rebuild Jeruſalem.

§. XV. But what gives the greateſt force to this proof, and adds new luſtre to the immutability of the prophecy of JESUS CHRIST, is the enterprize of JULIAN the apoſtate. This prince, after having declared war againſt JESUS CHRIST, believed himſelf inveſted with power ſufficient to annihilate his predictions; and accordingly he undertakes to convict them of falſhood: he was deſirous to wreſt from the Chriſtian Religion that conſtant teſtimony which the ſtate of the Jewiſh nation afforded it, and which he perceived to ſubſiſt in full force. To this end he projects the repairing of the temple, and to recal the diſperſed Jews, who were always ready to ſecond, or even to anticipate, the heathens, in their fury towards the Chriſtians: he animates and exhorts them to concur in this his grand deſign: he makes the greateſt preparations; ſets

ſets apart immenſe ſums for the purpoſe; and commits the execution of it to *Alypius* of Antioch, giving him the governor of Judæa for his colleague. The Jewiſh nation flock thither from all parts, and exhauſts itſelf from it's own ſtock in expenſive preparations. In order to work upon new foundations, they dig up and remove what remained of the old; an action, by which evidently the prophecies of JESUS CHRIST were accompliſhed. "The ſuperſtructure "of Chriſtianity, diveſted of the founda- "tions of ancient revelation hangs in the air, "and muſt fall of courſe: the temple, ſprung "from it's own ruins, would be an ever- "laſting monument of the triumph of ido- "latry, over the two Religions, which made "a profeſſion of combatting all it's efforts*." But we may reſt perfectly ſatisfied on this head, the word of JESUS CHRIST is firm and immoveable; and all the power of man ſhall never prevail againſt it. He hath built his church on a rock, and nothing can overthrow it: He hath deſtroyed the temple, and nothing ſhall be able to raiſe it again. The very efforts employed by mankind to

* See De Bleterie's Life of Julian.

invalidate his predictions, ſhall even ſerve only to their full and entire completion. This was the ſole conſequence of all this grand enterprize of the apoſtate.

The Jews, and the workmen employed by Julian, dug up the remains of the old foundations of the temple, and thereby completely verified the prophecy of our Saviour, by *not leaving one ſtone upon another*, and by aboliſhing even the leaſt traces of that edifice. But after having thus ſerved to give that prophecy it's utmoſt degree of accompliſhment; ſcarcely had they begun to lay the new foundations, when a violent earthquake thruſt forth the ſtones with an amazing force. Firey whirlwinds ruſh out with impetuoſity from the bowels of the earth; and being ſeveral times repeated, devour the implements, the materials, and the labourers. New attempts are made, and the place conſtantly proves inacceſſible. The prodigies are ſo terrible, and ſo continually renewed, that, at length, all the obſtinacy of the Jews, their ardent zeal for the temple, their hatred of JESUS CHRIST, and the whole power and combined efforts of Julian,

are forced to yield. Thus was the infidelity of the one, and the raſhneſs of the others, for ever confounded; and the truth of our Saviour's predictions confirmed by the agency of thoſe very perſons who had inſolently undertaken to convict them of falſhood.

No one can contend againſt the reality of all theſe facts, without previouſly teſtifying the moſt ſtupid hiſtorical ſcepticiſm; for they are confirmed by whatever can render human teſtimony indubitable. They are atteſted by *Marcellinus**, a cotemporary author, a phi-

* "Julian being deſirous to eternize his reign by the "greatneſs of his atchievments, formed a reſolution to "rebuild, at an immenſe expence, the proud and magni-"ficent temple of Jeruſalem: he committed the conduct "of this affair to *Alypius* of Antioch, who formerly had "been lieutenant in *Britain*. When therefore Alypius "had ſet himſelf to the vigorous execution of this charge, "in which he had all the aſſiſtance which the governor of "the province [of Judea] could afford: horrible balls of "fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent "and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time "to time, inacceſſible to the ſcorched and blaſted work-"men; and the victorious element, continuing in this "manner, obſtinately bent, as it were, to repel their at-"tempts, the enterprize was given over." AMM. MARCELLIN. lib. xxiii. ch. i.

loſopher,

loſopher, a great admirer of Julian, and as bigotted to Paganiſm as himſelf; but withal a lover of truth, and ſo not likely to relate what he did not know to be true. They are alſo related by other authors equally cotemporary, or very nearly bordering upon the reign of Julian. Their teſtimony, though it be Chriſtian, cannot be objected to, ſince it is confirmed by that of a Pagan, and is uncontroverted by any body. But, as Sozomenes very well obſerves, not only thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of theſe extraordinary events, atteſt them, but the Jews and Pagans alſo, in ſpite of themſelves, give a deciſive teſtimony of it. Why, indeed, were they induced to renounce their enterprize, and abandon the work they had begun? Or, to ſpeak more properly, why were they unable to begin it? unleſs it was becauſe an inviſible power, by the diſplay of miracles, compelled them to give up an undertaking, purſued with ſo much ardour, and in favour of which every human means was eagerly employed.

Who then troubles himſelf to hope for the infidel's aſſent? Who now will requeſt him

him to acknowledge JESUS CHRIST for his GOD and Saviour? Muſt he not be forced to follow the example of two gentlemen of our time, who were unable to reſiſt the abovementioned deciſive proof of the event we have been relating. The firſt is Mr. Littleton: The other is Mr. Moyle; who, like the reſt of the free-thinkers of our age, admitted neither of prodigies or miracles; yet was unable to ſtand out againſt the certainty of thoſe which defeated Julian's enterprize. He could not help confeſſing, that "though he "gave little credit to the miracles which "are reported to have been performed "ſince the death of the apoſtles; yet he "dared not reject them all; becauſe of that "which happened in the time of Julian; "which, ſays he, is ſo extraordinary in all "it's circumſtances, and ſo fully atteſted, that "I know not with what face it is poſſible to "reject it." Mr. *Moſheim*, the excellent eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian *, gives us his thoughts upon the ſubject in the following terms: "I cannot conceive how it could enter into "the minds of ſome learned men of this

* See his hiſtory juſt tranſlated by Mr. Maclaine.

"age,

" age, to entertain a doubt of the truth of " this remarkable ſtory. For though the " Chriſtian authors who atteſt it, ſhould " not appear to them to be worthy of cre- " dit, yet how could they ſuſpect Ammia- " nus Marcellinus, an hiſtorian ſo ſtrictly " impartial, and free from every prepoſ- " ſeſſion in favour of the Chriſtian Reli- " gion? How could they except againſt " other authors, as little to be ſuſpected? " For my own part, I know not upon what " facts, or what ancient hiſtory we can de- " pend, if it be alowed to reject that of " which we are ſpeaking, though ſupported " by ſo many teſtimonies; and this merely " becauſe the facts of which they treat ap- " pear leſs credible.".

We deſire Rouſſeau and his diſciples to give Biſhop *Warburton*'s celebrated diſſertation * an impartial peruſal. In that work the learned author treats of this point of hiſtory with all the ſagacity of the moſt judicious criticiſm: he firſt proves that Julian's attempt had been formed under circumſtances ſo

* Intituled Julian.

intereſting

intereſting that the honour of revelation neceſſarily demanded a divine miracle. Indeed the ſacred volumes expreſsly ſay, that *Jeruſalem and it's temple ſhall be deſtroyed; and that their ruins ſhall never be built upon again.* An impious prince ſeeks to falſify this prophecy, purpoſing to rebuild the temple. What are we not to expect from the wiſdom and juſtice of the ſupreme Being? Shall it permit the triumph of impiety, and that the majeſty of it's decrees be contemned? Surely no: it is impoſſible. The King of kings will vindicate his glory, and juſtify the unalterable veracity of his word in the face of the whole univerſe. God will not be ſlack to oppoſe, by a prodigy demonſtrative of his power, ſo amazing an incredulity. It was impoſſible therefore, as the biſhop goes on to prove, for an attempt ſo impious as that of Julian, to be attended with the leaſt degree of ſucceſs. So that there is nothing leſs ſurprizing than the prodigy which defeated the deſign of this emperor; a prodigy which comes witneſſed to us by whatever can render human teſtimony indubitable. Thoſe enemies of Chriſtianity, who lived neareſt to the period in which this

this revolution commenced, and Julian himſelf, have confirmed it by their own acknowledgment; though they endeavour at the ſame time to conceal the ſhame of it by ſubterfuges. Obſerve what the emperor ſays in one of his moſt celebrated harangues. "Let no one pretend to impoſe upon us by "plauſible ſpeeches, or think to terrify us, "by alledging the decrees of providence. "What indeed can thoſe Jewiſh prophets "ſay, who hold up theſe decrees before our "eyes? What will they ſay of their temple "ruined for the third time, without, how-"ever, having been rebuilt? I do not urge "this to make it out as a matter of ſhame "to them; ſince I myſelf in theſe latter "times, thought to have rebuilt it to the "honour of that GOD who had formerly "been worſhiped there." But, what is very remarkable, Julian, who through the whole tranſaction had only ambitious and political views, furniſhed, without knowing it, a powerful argument in favour of the Chriſtian Religion, by owning that he had vainly attempted to diſcredit the oracle of JESUS CHRIST, concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Theſe words which Julian makes

makes uſe of, as Mr. *De la Bleterie* obſerves, nearly reſemble, in the mouth of a ſovereign, a direct confeſſion of a diſappointed enterprize.

It was doubtleſs with the flattering idea of repairing this diſgrace, that Julian affected to appear unmoved at it. The common people placed it to the account of unfavourable omens; the free-thinkers to that of miracles; and himſelf and his philoſophers endeavoured to their utmoſt, to ſhew it proceeded from natural cauſes, in order to rob the Deity of the honour of ſo glorious a miracle.

Biſhop Warburton, in the ſtrongeſt manner, decries this weak natural philoſophy, which ever affects to ſet aſide the agency of the Sovereign LORD of the univerſe. He demonſtrates that it is wholly unlikely, and even impoſſible, that thoſe firey eruptions ſhould have been the work of any human art; and that it is no leſs abſurd to ſuppoſe them but a mere ſimple phenomenon of nature. This able critic, after defeating every objection, proves, that the character

character of the prophecy which pronounced that the temple ſhould never be raiſed again from it's ruins, according to the nature of the divine decrees, rendered this miracle indiſpenſible for the honour of Religion. He obſerves, that the evidence of Marcellinus's teſtimony is ſo perfect and full in every particular, that no one circumſtance can be found, either in its manner or narration, of which an unbeliever could poſſibly avail himſelf, for the denying his aſſent to the fact: and that there is not a ſingle particular deficient, which a Chriſtian could need, in order to eſtabliſh his converſion. In ſhort, he concludes, that the various relations which have been given of the matter by the fathers of the church, and the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, are not only conſiſtent with, but ſerve mutually to corroborate each other: ſo that the circumſtances of theſe relations, which, at a firſt view, might appear leaſt credible, become, upon a mature examination, the moſt worthy of belief.

We muſt not then be at all ſurprized, that Mr. Moyle ſhould yield to the reſiſtleſs

leſs force of theſe united proofs. They would ſoon have imitators, did but the infidels of our time poſſeſs a like generoſity of mind; or would they but examine the facts in queſtion with the ſame degree of ſincerity. But the unbeliever is never deficient of trifling pretences, to fix him in his ignorance, and to diveſt the Deity of the honour due to his works. Sometimes they are imputed to ſubtile tricks, which it is not poſſible to account for: at other times they are made to be the effect of unknown natural cauſes; by means of which the infidel boaſts himſelf able to account for every marvellous circumſtance of extraordinary events. "Nature, as the author of the life "of Julian very well obſerves, was always "the reſource of infidels; but ſhe ſo com- "pletely ſerves the cauſe of Religion, that "they ought, at leaſt, to ſuſpect her of "colluſion and deceit."

§. XVI. After ſo many clear proofs and demonſtrations, upon what ground can Rouſſeau tell us, "I ſhall never believe that I "have acquired a ſufficient acquaintance "with the arguments of the Jews, till they

Concluding proofs from the ſtate of the Jews.

" compoſe a free and independent ſtate, and " have ſchools and univerſities of their own, " where they may talk and diſpute without " hazard. Till then we can never truly " know what they have to ſay." Yet, do not they openly proclaim to all the world, the DEICIDE they have committed in the perſon of JESUS CHRIST? Who among them can prove that the Deity ſtill continues to dwell amongſt their tribes? They have had no prophets ever ſince the coming of JESUS CHRIST. Nor can they ſhew us a ſingle miracle with which GOD hath aſſiſted them, as he formey did. The thing is eaſily to be accounted for. Nor is there any need of a free ſtate, or ſchools, or univerſities, to aſſiſt in reſolving it. Let the Jews ſhew us one miracle performed in their favour ſince the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. Let them produce a ſingle prophet ſince the coming of our Saviour; and we grant they have won the cauſe: but that is an impracticable point. Our ancient apologiſts as well as the modern, have always offered them the ſame challenge, and they never ventured to accept it. The Gentiles no ſooner abandoned their idols, to follow the light

light of that truth, wherewith JESUS CHRIST came to enlighten their minds, than the Lord of Hoſts withdrew from Jeruſalem every wiſe architect who was capable of building. *The clouds have received command to rain no more upon the vine of Sorec* †. And the ſpring of heavenly bleſſings is dryed up from the houſe of Iſrael. All are transferred to the church of JESUS CHRIST. The ſame proofs which eſtabliſhed the divinity of the Jewiſh Religion, confirm that of Chriſtianity. The incredulous Jew cannot combat it without acting againſt himſelf. The miracles and prophecies of JESUS CHRIST are as deciſive in his favour, as were thoſe miracles which Moſes wrought, and the prophecies which he declared, in ſupport of the Jewiſh diſpenſation.

The Jews have never ventured to deny the miracles of JESUS CHRIST. Their Talmud even makes mention of ſome which his diſciples performed in his name: all that they have been able to urge, in order to obſcure the luſtre of them, is, that they were

† Iſai. v. 6.

wrought with the aſſiſtance of enchantment, which, ſay they, the diſciples learned in Ægypt; but, ſhould they not be cautious while they advance this, leſt they ſhould furniſh weapons againſt themſelves? Was not Moſes accuſed of the ſame crime? and did not the Ægyptians place him in the number of their principal magicians? What can they reply to ſuch an accuſation? They will inſiſt, without doubt, that the illuſions of magic never have a laſting effect; and that it's purpoſe cannot be to eſtabliſh the worſhip of GOD, and purity of manners. In ſhort, that true miracles and the works of GOD cannot be imitated by the power of devils. Now theſe very reaſons unanſwerably prove that JESUS CHRIST was no magician; and ſo trifling a charge can only ſerve to render his miracles inconteſtible; and, by juſt conſequence, to prove him the Meſſiah.

To demand, as Rouſſeau does, that the Jews ſhould have an independent ſtate, ſchools, and univerſities, is to require at the ſame time the total overthrow of Chriſtianity, and of the Jewiſh revelation. If the Jews

Jews were to riſe from their preſent ſtate of abjection, without being previouſly converted to JESUS CHRIST; from thenceforth the Chriſtian Religion would be overthrown and confounded; and JESUS CHRIST would ceaſe to be the object pointed out by the ancient writings. It would no longer be impoſſible for the infidel to convict them of falſity, and to ſhew that they are but a collection of vain ceremonies, falſhoods, and contradictions.

But how powerfully do the Jews in their preſent ſituation argue in favour of JESUS CHRIST! Their own ſcriptures inform us, that ſuch a condition is the juſt puniſhment of their unbelief with regard to JESUS CHRIST; and that they ſhall never extricate themſelves from it till they believe in him. To convince us of this matter, it is ſufficient only to caſt our eyes over the 69th Pſalm, verſes 4, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20—26.

All theſe paſſages admirably ſuit with the character of JESUS CHRIST. It is Him whom the Jews made to undergo all thoſe indignities of which the prophet complains:

Him, to *whom they gave gall for meat, and vinegar for drink.* After all these excesses of barbarity committed upon his person, the desecration made in his name, hath *poured upon the Jews all the effects of divine anger and indignation.* Their books are become *a snare, in which they have been taken, because their eyes are darkened that they can no longer see; their habitation is become desolate* by the destruction of their city, and their dispersion; because *they have persecuted and oppressed him, whom God hath smitten* for our sakes.

But these same scriptures, which foretold to this people it's chastisement and misery, have as clearly pronounced that GOD would preserve that people to the latest posterity, by a miraculous protection, and would open their eyes to the light, by recalling them to faith and true holiness. " *The children of* " *Israel*, says Hosea, *shall be a long time* " *without a king, and without a prince, and* " *without a sacrifice, and without an altar,* " *without an ephod, and without teraphim.* " *But afterwards shall the children of Israe* " *return to the Lord their God; they shal* " *seek*

" *ſeek him, and David their king, and they* " *ſhall be filled with reſpect and fear of* " *the Lord, becauſe of his goodneſs towards* " *them; and this ſhall happen in the latter* " *days* †." The condition in which the Jews have continued ever ſince the time that they crucified JESUS CHRIST, could not be more clearly pointed out, nor the cauſe of it be expreſſed, in a more exact manner. It is for not having acknowledged the true DAVID, and for having rejected GOD himſelf in His perſon: for the prophet declares, that *when the Jews ſhall return, they will ſeek the Lord their God, and David their king*. This David then is come, and they have not known him; and GOD hath ceaſed to be their GOD, ſince they are ſtill in ſearch both of one and the other: they have not known the great bleſſing which GOD hath beſtowed; his *excellent gift*; that is to ſay, the MESSIAH; in as much as when they return to him, *they will be penetrated with a profound reſpect, and holy fear, becauſe of the goodneſs of the Lord.*

† Hoſea iii. 4, 5.

What great light then does the abject condition of the Jews ſhed upon the Chriſtian Religion! The œconomy of their infidelity is admirable, and bears ſuch characters of divinity, as muſt ſtrike every one who conſiders it. Can any thing be more powerfully affecting or divine, than to behold that people which rejected and crucified JESUS CHRIST, and which put him to open ſhame and reproach; unanimouſly atteſt the divinity of thoſe books which depoſe in favour of him as the Meſſiah; and declare that this very people ſhall reject him, and be daſhed in pieces againſt that *ſtone of ſtumbling*. Is it not evident that this people is made to ſerve expreſſly as a witneſs in favour of JESUS CHRIST and his Religion? If the Jews had believed in JESUS CHRIST, what pretence of infidelity could we have urged? They might have been accuſed of being in confederacy with us to deceive mankind; and we ſhould only have had ſuſpicious witneſſes of the truth of the ſacred writings; but how can any one reſiſt the force of a teſtimony ſo deciſive as that of a whole nation, which cannot be ſuſpected

of

of wilfully favouring or countenancing the Chriſtian Religion, to which it is the greateſt enemy? The ſtrictneſs and fidelity wherewith this people hath preſerved the books of it's law, are known and acknowledged; and in ſpite of all the advantage we claim to derive from thoſe books, againſt whatever they may urge in oppoſition to our Religion, this people hath never ſuffered the leaſt alteration to be made in them; and conſequently, it warrants to us all thoſe prophecies by which Chriſtianity is authorized and ſupported.

The Pagans might have charged us, as ſome infidels of our own time have done, with having prepoſterouſly contrived all thoſe convincing prophecies, which ſo long ago drew up the character of the Meſſiah, and foretold the coming of JESUS CHRIST, and the eſtabliſhment of his church, had we not ſome ſolid argument to offer in contradiction to their charge. But GOD, in order to ſupply mankind with every proof they could deſire, hath depoſited theſe prophecies with a people which is an enemy to the Chriſtian name; if ever it had an enemy. He hath diſperſed

diſperſed this people throughout the world, thereby to render an authentic and irrefragable teſtimony to the truth and certainty of all thoſe prophecies. " You ſee, " as we have obſerved to the Pagans, the " clear and deciſive prophecies which we " object againſt your worſhip; and which " you accuſe us of having ourſelves com- " poſed: the more evident they are, the " more falſe do they appear to you, and ſo " much the more ſtrongly do you ſeem to " be perſuaded that they are counterfeit and " framed, after the coming of him whom " they proclaim: but, to ſatisfy all your " doubts, and to ſilence the accuſation you " bring againſt us, conſult the Jews, that " people, who are ſtill more irreconcileable " enemies to the faith than yourſelves. You " cannot ſuſpect them of conniving with " us to deceive and ſeduce you." The Jews here cited in confirmation of our teſtimony, declared to the Pagans that Moſes was a man ſent from GOD to be their legiſlator; that he lived fifteen hundred years before the coming of JESUS CHRIST: and that all the prophets lived *a long while* before *Him*. Convinced of this the Pagans could no longer

heſitate

heſitate to admire the ſolidity of thoſe foundations which unite in ſupport of the Chriſtian Religion; ſince even the Jews, though it's moſt inveterate enemies bore ſuch a teſtimony to it as turned to their confuſion, and which, conſequently, truth alone could draw from their mouths.

In ſhort, every circumſtance concurs to ſhew to the unbelievers, that the *Chriſtian Religion* derives it's ſtrength from whatever can be invented to deſtroy it. Let any one look at this aſſemblage of proofs in favour of our Religion, and he muſt deplore the obſtinate blindneſs of thoſe who endeavour to bring it into contempt or oblivion.

F I N I S.

A N

A N

Alphabetical INDEX.

A.

APOLLONIUS TYANEUS, the impoſtor; compared with our Saviour Page 241
Application to Rouſſeau, on the ignorance and inconſiſtency of philoſophers, reſpecting GOD, the world, &c. —— —— —— 60
—— of the proofs of the Meſſiah, to the Jews, 364
Argument of Rouſſeau concerning the Jewiſh, Chriſtian, and Mahometan Religion, ſtated, and his inconſiſtency ſhewn —— —— 319
Authority of, and of that of the Church in particular 223
—— of the Chriſtian Church; common men muſt reſt in it —— —— 273

B.

Belief, the difficulties in revelation no objection to it 109

C.

Condition and ſtate of man —— —— 1
Conſequence, plain and natural, of miracles 237
Conſideration of what Rouſſeau urges in favour of the Jews —— —— —— 364
Copies, and various readings of S. S. —— 277
Chriſt, his miracles, why rejected —— 234
—— his moral character —— —— 295

Chriſt,

Christ, his doctrine, and the preparation for his coming Page 300
—— his life and death —— —— 303
—— his disciples, and those of Socrates 305
—— his character, evidence to the truth of Christianity —— —— —— 314
—— proved to be the Messiah, from a view of the prophecies —— —— 341
—— from a review of what has happened since his coming —— —— 355
—— his divine character —— 387
Christian vindicated, and Rousseau refuted 334
—— Religion, most ancient —— 338
Christians have sufficient proofs to convince the Jews *ibid.*
Christianity, means used to propagate it, proper 134
—— first preachers of it, proof of it's divinity 138
—— continuance of, a miracle —— 152
Church, authority of —— —— 231
—— common men must rest in it —— 273

D.

Depravity original, proofs of —— 17
—— human, notions of ancient philosophers respecting it —— —— 24
Designation of man, ignorance and inconsistency of philosophers respecting it —— —— 52
Detail of the revelation of the great promise of a Redeemer —— —— 90
Difficulties in the doctrine of original sin unavoidable 27
—— in revelation no objection to the belief of it 109
Disciples of CHRIST and Socrates —— 305
Divinity of Christianity, it's preachers a proof of it 138
Doctrine, miracles prove the truth of —— 171
—— A survey of scripture in that light 174

Doctrine of CHRIST, and the preparation for his coming —— —— Page 300
Dominion of flesh and sense over reason —— —— 9

E.

Enquiry into the manner in which the Mahometan and Jewish Religions were propagated —— 330
Evidences to the truth of Christianity, from the character of CHRIST —— —— 314
Evils unavoidable of man —— —— 15

F.

Facts in support of the Christian Religion, the allowed notoriety of —— —— 125
Faith human, of —— —— 117
—— the simplicity of —— —— 203
Flesh and sense, their dominion over reason 9

G.

God, ignorance and inconsistency of philosophers respecting him —— —— 48
—— ignorance of, proof of the want of revelation 43

H.

Happiness —— —— —— 6
Heathens unjustifiable in punishing Christians 192

I.

Jerusalem, proofs from the prophecies concerning the city and temple —— —— 400
—— proof of the truth of Christianity from the attempt of Julian to rebuild it —— 406
Jews, application to, —— —— 364
—— their state, a proof of the truth of Christianity 417

Jewish

Jewish obstinacy, proof of the truth of Christianity Page 398
Ignorance of GOD, proof of want of revelation 43
——— and inconsistency of philosophers respecting GOD ——— ——— 48
——— respecting the origin of the world 49
——— respecting the soul ——— 51
——— respecting the condition and designation of man ——— ——— ——— 52
——— respecting moral truths ——— 56
Inconsistency of Rousseau, in his comparison of the Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan Religions, shewn 319
Infancy, the state of, considered ——— 4
Introduction to dissert. I. ——— ——— 1
——— to dissert. III. ——— ——— 133
——— to dissert. V. ——— ——— 286
Judaism modern, of ——— ——— 378
Julian's attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, a proof of the truth of Christianity. ——— — 406

L.

Life and death of CHRIST ——— ——— 303

M.

Mahometan Religion examined, and compared with the Christian ——— ——— 322
——— Religion, of the success of 333
Man, his natural state and condition 1, &c.
——— his unavoidable evils ——— ——— 15
Manner in which the Mahometan and Christian Religion were propagated, enquired into 330
Martyrs ——— ——— ——— 309
Means used to propagate Christianity, proper 134
Messiah, CHRIST proved to be, from a view of the prophecies 341
——— from a review of what has happened since his coming ——— ——— 355
——— a suffering one, necessary and proper for man 382

Miracle,

Miracle, the greateſt the propagation of Chriſtianity Page 135
Miracles, &c. as well atteſted as we could deſire 142
——— ſufficiently atteſted —— 149
——— the reaſon of ——— 159
——— prove the truth of a doctrine 171
——— moſt proper —— —— 217
——— their natural and plain conſequence 237
——— real, inconteſtible evidences of truth 244
——— CHRIST's, why rejected —— 234
——— Chriſtian, fit, proper, and benign 164
——— Witneſſes to ——— —— 156

N.

Neceſſity of revelation, proof of —— 72
——————— the diſcovery of remiſſion of ſins another proof of it 87
Notoriety of the facts of the Chriſtian Religion 125

O.

Obſtinacy of the Jews, a proof of the truth of Chriſtianity —— —— —— 398

P.

Philoſophers ancient, their notions of human depravity 24
——— their ignorance and inconſiſtency reſpecting GOD, &c. &c. ——— ——— 48
Preachers (the firſt,) of Chriſtianity, a proof of it's divinity —— —— —— 138
Promiſe great, of a Redeemer, a detail of the revelation thereof ——— ——— 90
Propagation of Chriſtianity the greateſt miracle 135
Prophecies, a view of, from whence JESUS CHRIST proved to be the Meſſiah —— —— 341

R.

Readings and copies of the S. S. various obſervations reſpecting them —— —— Page 277
Reaſon ſubject to fleſh and ſenſe —— 9
—— leads to a belief in miracles —— 205
—— human, weak and incapable, alone, of diſcovering religious truths —— —— 196
Redeemer, a detail of the revelation of the promiſe of him —— —— —— 90
Redemption a full remedy of original ſin —— 33
Religion, Chriſtian, the moſt ancient —— 338
Remiſſion of ſins, the diſcovery of, a further proof of the neceſſity of revelation —— 87
Revelation, it's difficulties no objection to the belief of it —— —— —— 100
—— neceſſity of it proved —— 72
—— want of it proved from the ignorance of man reſpecting GOD —— —— 43
Rouſſeau refuted —— —— 21
—— ſtrictures on —— —— 36
—— application to him, of the argument drawn from the inconſiſtency and ignorance of the philoſophers 48
—— his diſtinction of the obligation to ſubmit to revelation, examined —— —— 109
—— ſelf-contradiction, &c. —— 114
—— teſtimony to the excellency of the S. S. 288
—— inconſiſtency in the compariſon of the three chief Religions —— —— 319
—— refuted, and the Chriſtian vindicated 334
—— argument for the Jews conſidered 364

S.

Scriptures, on the —— —— 267
—— concerning the various copies and readings of them —— —— —— 277

Scriptures

Scriptures ſufficiently known and read, &c. Page 283
——— *Rouſſeau*'s teſtimony of their excellency 288
Self-contradiction, &c. of Rouſſeau —— 114
Senſe and fleſh their dominion over reaſon 9
Sin original, difficulties in the doctrine of, unavoidable 27
——— fully remedied by redemption ——— 33
Sins, diſcovery of remiſſion of them a proof of the neceſſity of revelation —— —— 87
Socrates and CHRIST, their diſciples —— 305
Soul, ignorance of philoſophers reſpecting it 48
Succeſs of the Mahometan Religion ——— 333
Survey of ſcripture, to ſhew that miracles prove the truth of a doctrine ——— ——— 174

T.

Temple of Jeruſalem and city, proofs from the prophecies concerning them —— —— 400
Truth —— —— —— 4
—— of a doctrine proved by miracles 171
—— real miracles inconteſtible evidences of it 244
—— of Chriſtianity, evidence to, from the character of CHRIST ——— ——— 314
Truths moral, ignorance and inconſiſtency of the philoſophers reſpecting them ——— 56

W.

Witneſſes to Chriſtian miracles —— —— 159
World, the ignorance and inconſiſtency of philoſophers reſpecting it's origin —— ——— 49
Worſhip internal, eſſential to external ——— 159

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01016 2024